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PROFESSIONAL BURNOUT OF SOCIAL WORKERS IN THE CONTEXT OF COVID-19 IN LITHUANIA

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CONTENT

INTRODUCTION

From the end of 2019 until today we are attendees of the Global pandemic Covid-19. Our daily life is all surrounded by information about the reasons, consequences, and ways of prevention this pandemic. Every day we see and listen to media, society around us, discussing issues connected to this topic. From the beginning till now, we went to the different stages and all of them were challenging for everyone no matter of country, society group, age, sex, or profession. Each person has their own story of how she/he is dealing with this problem. Since the day of declaring the Covid-19 pandemic around the globe, the World Health Organization is putting all its effort to include other organizations, international agencies and philanthropists to work cooperatively against pandemics. It is significant to note that for WHO not only pandemic by itself, but also spreading myths about this virus through social media was and still remains a big challenge (Amiri, A. S., Akram, M. , 2020).

In this conditions, it is very interesting to try to understand challenges what social workers face since this is one of those professions when specialist usually has contact with the client about their mental condition. During this time of the pandemic, there have been several changes in regard to working time, place, requirements for social workers in Lithuania and not only. From the general knowledge, it is clear that changes happening rapidly regarding the Covid-19 pandemic and there is always a great need for readiness from the professional's side because everyone around having hope on them like for other health care specialists as well. This discussion leads us to the main point in this regard to find out the correlation between professional social worker's conditions during pandemic and burnout syndrome. In this time of the global pandemic, emerged need for paying great attention to professional social workers. Among other mental health care specialists, they are considered at high risk of burnout (Endriulaitiene, E., Marksaityte, R., Žardeckaitė-Matulaitienė, K., Pranckeviciene, A., 2016). In this regard, they might face work-related stress-reaction which is considered as professional burnout of social workers (Bakker, A. B., Demerouti, E., Schaufeli, W. B., 2003). While talking about burnout of mental hethcare professionals and more specific social workers it is worthy to mention that the reasons and symptoms of burnout might be different depending on case. Covid-19 by itself because of its quite new aspect reflects not much scientific literature about the affect of it for different professions and rofessionals. Nevertheless since Covid-19 is not the first one in the history of world pandemics, but it stands to be the fifth pandemic after the 1918 year of flu pandemic (Paul, R., 2020). This means our world has experienced this type of condition and in terms of different professions and professionals has been studied as well. This

research about Burnout syndrome among professional Social workers during Covid-19, is quite new and not known for history so far since the topic is about recent actions taken place all around the world.

There is more statistical information used in this research, based on the topic. The only reason is lack of researches done in this direction. Humanity is still on a process of analyzing results what is damage and in general how this pandemic effects on our life. However, Different from previous works in this research main target is population, more specific social workers affected by COVID-19 in Lithuania.

It is significant that research in this filed is valuable not only for theoretical part also for practical issues in this scope of work. Hence from there, research is one step forward to make this work easier and follow world changes by updating data for professional development, in this case for social workers.

The research object: challenges connected to burnout syndrome among professional social workers during Covid-19.

Research goal: Theoretically and empirically base professional burnout syndrome prevalence of social workers in the context of Covid-19. The main goal is to analyze issues and reasons for stress, burnout of social workers during a pandemic.

Research objectives are:

1)To describe professional burnout syndrome causes, consequences, and prevention;

2)To analyze and describe the context of COVID-19 pandemic and the reasons of stress and burnout of social workers; analyze the effect of the pandemic in the professional life of social workers;

3) To reveal how did problems of social workers change through the pandemic at workplace.

Work methods:

• Analysis of scientific literature, content analysis.

• Qualitative research method, semi-structured interview has been used; As this work is based on qualitative research, questions for research are: How does the daily routine of social workers change during the COVID-19 pandemic? What is/was the biggest challenge in their professional carrier during this time?   • Content analysis of the research data analysis; This research includes an analysis of theoretical and empirical sources. Using categories and subcategories while analysing the content of collected data.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Social work- A profession that works with individuals, families, groups, communities to promote human growth, development, and social justice (Teater, B., , 2014).

Social worker- The main focus of social workers is on helping people to improve their social functioning, ability to have relationships with others (My Social Work Lab, 2011).

Burnout- Is a psychological response that usually develops when persons who are working in human service professions and have to deal with people. It is exposed to chronic emotional interpersonal stressors at work (Kumar, S., 2018). Job burnout has been recognized as an occupational hazard for several professions like human services, education, and health care. First, it was discussed in the middle of the 1970s (Maslach, C., Goldberg, J., 1998). The key characteristics of job burnout are Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Professional incompetence (Ashforth, B. E., 1991).

Emotional Exhaustion- It is considered one of the basic stress dimensions when it comes to burnout. Emotional exhaustion is the feeling of work overload and personal conflict at work, after which a person is facing exhaustion and lack of energy (Maslach, C., Goldberg, J., 1998).

Depersonalization- Same as cynicism is the burnout dimension which expresses changing attitude toward the workplace or people at work. Can be also exposed to loss of idealism in regard to the job. A person has a feeling of lacking control over tasks which are supposed to be done at work, In this stage, people mainly feel social detachment from their colleagues (Pranjic, N., 2014).

Professional Incompetence- Same as reduced personal accomplishment or inefficacy is another dimension of professional burnout and means that person has reduced feeling of competence and productivity at work (Maslach, C., Leiter, M., 2007).

Pandemic - A disease that has an effect on a large number of people and is spread around several countries and continents. Throughout history, there have been several significant pandemics

that cause har for people not only in health regards but as well in economic, cultural and political aspects (Qiu, W., Rutherford, S., Mao, A., Chu, A., 2017).

Covid-19- (same as Coronavirus) Is the pandemic is the fifth one in world history? Mainly appeared by a limited cluster of cases of pneumonia. The first case was approved in Wuhan, China, and until today countries all over the world struggling to cope with it (Balkhair, A. A., 2020).

SARS-CoV-2- (meaning - Saevere Acute Respiratory Syndrome) Is the generalized name of viruses that first started in 2003 SARS-CoV-1 according to the scientist's first outbreak was also connected to other coronaviruses isolated from bets. Some types of coronaviruses can also be the reason for viruses among animals and not only humans. SARS-CoV-2 same as Covid-19 first was officially approved in December 2019 (WHO, World Health Organization, 2020).

Fatigue- Is mostly associated with chronic illnesses and there are categorizations of this concept in detail, some scientists consider fatigue from the spectrum of psychology, physiology and etc. Regardless the multidimensional approach towards this illness fatigues is a symptom connected to the feelings of tiredness and exhaustion, among people (Neuberger, G. B., Williams, P. D., Press, A. N ., 1999).

1. DESCRIPTION AND CHARACTERISTICS OF PROFESSIONAL BURNOUT

Likewise, as defining other kinds of terms professional burnout also has its different variations of meaning, depending on the researcher and specification of study that has been conducted. So in this part of the study paper will be analyzed the concept of professional burnout by combining definitions from different authors. Also will pay attention to the dimensions of professional burnout researched by Christina Maslach. While talking about professional burnout we also have to keep an eye on its symptoms, reasons, and finally some ways, suggestions on how to prevent it.

1.1 The concept of professional burnout

Burnout can be defined as disease connected with emotional exhaustion, depersonalization which leads us to the stage when people can no longer deal with stress related to their job (Alvares,M. E. M., Thomaz,E. B. A. F., CLamy, Z., Nina, R. V. A. H., 2020). It is considered that burnout is disease which is the result of prolonged response to chronic emotional and psychological stressors at workplace (Lazo, F. J. F., Cano, I. C. M., Coronel, A. A. R.,, 2021). There are three dimensions of professional burnout, which will be analyzed widely in the following chapters. It is very important to mention that alongside researchers American social psychologist Christina Maslach has a huge contribution when it comes to job burnout. She has conducted several study materials about burnout syndrome at the workplace. The most important is that she is the pioneer even for defining, predicting, and making measurements in this regard. As well she created Maslach Burnout Inventory known as MBI which is instrument to measure job burnout (University of California, Berkeley, 2019). Using term burnout for describing phenomena of distressing state what people experience by working in human services and feeling overwhelmed by emotional demands of their work (Leiter, P. M., 1993). Together with Wilmar B. Schafeli and Michael Leiter, Christina maslach in their study about job burnout in 2001 will say *"burnout is a problem that is specific to the work context, in the contrast to depression, which tends to pervade every domain of personal life. These findings let empirical support to earlier claims that burnout is more job-related and situation-specific than general depression"* (Maslach, C., Shaufeli, W. B., Leiter, M., 2001)

As a disease professional burnout stands for the symptoms connected to emotional exhaustion and depersonalization which leads us to the stage when people can no longer deal with stress related to their job (Queen, D., Harding, K., 2020). Going deeper into the topic it is noteworthy to anayze why exactly is job/professional burnout different from very similar term of it, by which we also describe and use the word depression to express long leasted stress (Maslach, C., Shaufeli, W. B., Leiter, M., 2001). As already above mention while defining burnout, some scholars use almost the same terms as describing depression. So what exactly is the difference and similarities between these two concepts?! It seems that both of them can be paused job-related stressors, which are not answered for a long time, regardless of this clear similarity. Studies still show that the main difference is very important in this regard to mention. *"It has been asserted that burnout differs from depression by the way that symptoms of depression are in early stages of burnout"* (Bianchi, R., Schonfeld, I. S., Laurent, E., 2018). It is known that the use of the term burnout began in the 1970s, this proves that the issue by itself became the interest object way before. When researchers started paying attention to aspects led into in social problem. There have been examples from real life or from different writers' stories when a person loses idealism and passion towards his/her job. Starting with this kind of stories job burnout became a noteworthy subject to make research about (Maslach, C., Shaufeli, W. B., Leiter, M., 2001).

Professional burnout can occur on base of emotional tension of preson, prolonged response of stresses at work (Maslach, C., Leiter, M. P. , 2018).

According to the (Gudžinskienė, V., Pozdniakovas, A., Šinkūnienė, J. R., 2021) *"Burnout syndrome at work can resul from work content, working conditions or employment relationships".*

In her study paper Fanny J. Fajardo-Lazo with her colleagues says that *" Burnout is a process in which the work context and interpersonal aspects contribute to the development of burnout and a condition of psychological distress related to work organization, characterizedcby three dimensions: Emotional exhaustion, Depersonalization and feelings of professional incompetence"* (Lazo, F. J. F., Cano, I. C. M., Coronel, A. A. R.,, 2021) After defining the dimensions of professional burnout by Christina Maslach this concept is widely used by various researchers so it is getting easier to look at this issue from a different perspective.

From the type of occasion and situation depending on how will the burnout appear itself but usually it starts with the first steps of emotional exhaustion (Korunka, C., Tement, S., Zdrehus, C., Borza, A.,).

In summary, professional burnout is a psychological phenomenon that affects a person's emotional, mental and physical condition. Terms of professional burnout emerges usually in the workplace. Since by the description of symptoms, burnout stands close to stress, the main difference between these two concepts is about timing. More specific, burnout is considered a long-lasted process in the time frame.

1.2. Dimensions of professional burnout

While talking about the assessment of burnout symptoms it is important to mention again the work of Maslach and Jackson. in their research about burnout syndrome among professionals, they analyze results from researching workers from health and social services such as teachers, nurses, social workers and etc. Even though they avoided conceptualizing three components of burnout syndrome as above mentioned: exhaustion, depersonalization, and feeling of reduced personal accomplishment. In their study, they recommended examining all these three-component separately. This point of view has been criticized because by some scholars opinion it is not beneficial for solving the problem to take just one dimension of it and deal. At the same time, this way might be very successful when we are sure that a professional is feeling burned out while she/he is facing exhaustion or depersonalization or feeling reduced his/her personal accomplishment. So each of them should be faced separately and together (Bianchi, R., Laurent, E., Schonfeld, I. S. , 2018). Burnout Syndrome as already mentioned above is introduced with three main symptoms that professionals might be facing during their career. These are three classic symptoms of burnout syndrome: exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. To define each of them generally and in terms of burnout syndrome will start with exhaustion.

According to the most widely cited meaning of burnout, is coming from Maslach's (1982) definition when she mentions that burnout is the syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, professional incompetence. For measurement will be used as well most widely known tool while talking about professional burnout Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) (Ashforth, B. E., 1991). Even though this measurement is the key point for most of the researchers doing their study about professional burnout topic, Three dimensions model and MBI by itself has been the object of critics several times (Leiter, P. M., 1993).In This Chapter will be described and analized what does these three dimensions cover in their meaning and ow are they connected to each other.

Emotional Exhaustion (EE): is the state of being extremely tired (MerriamWebster, 1828), when talking about burnout exhaustion is like general fatigue that is connected to devoting excessive time and effort to a task that is no longer received beneficial by professional (Mealer, M., Gozal, D. , 2016). Emotional exhaustion has been considered the result of tension, anxiety, physical fatigue and etc. What gives the subject to research psychological and physiologically is a state of feeling emotionally exhausted, worn-out, and considered is one of the most important dimensions of burnout. Depending on the case and person of course. Everyone experiences emotional exhaustion differently but symptoms can be the following: lack of motivation, insomnia, physical fatigue, headache, pessimism, feelings of hopelessness, apathy, nervousness, depression (Cafasso, J. , 2019). In terms of professional burnout emotional exhaustion is predicted to be associated with psychological and physiological strain (Ashforth, B. E., 1991).

Depersonalization (D): to define from the point of view of psychology, it is a state in which an individual feels that either he/she or the outside world is unreal. It can be examined together with the feeling of dissociation (Britanica, n.d.). In the case of burnout syndrome, it means a more distant or indifferent attitude towards work. From the definition, we can understand, depersonalization negative behavior from a person who is facing this issue. Sometimesdepersonalization is expressed in a rude or unpolite way Usually it affects coworkers' mood as well. In the case of professionals who are obligated to work with people, it affects their coworkers and clients as well (Mealer, M., Gozal, D. , 2016). Depersonalization is a stage of a person when she/he is feeling detachment from herself/himself. Depersonalization can be also accompanied by derealization where the external world is getting unfamiliar for a person. In case depersonalization and derealization symptoms are experienced in a long period of time than it becomes Depersonalization Disorder (DPD) (Phillips, H., Sierra, C., 2003). In terms of professional burnout, depersonalization is the response to the amount of stress coping when the person is no longer treating others like persons but considers them like objects of numbers. This might be the way of escaping to the problem instead of dealing with it (Ashforth, B. E., 1991).

Professional incompetence (PI): Is the same as reduced professional achievement, which can be independent associated with some other issues. (Lazo, F. J. F., Cano, I. C. M., Coronel, A. A. R.,, 2021). Personal incompetence has the tendency to negatively evaluate the worth of work that is planned to be done or is already done. Usually, professionals are feeling unable to perform the job and they are willing to express poor professional self-esteem. These are the main symptoms of burnout but not the only ones. There might be some different symptoms for each person facing

professional burnout syndrome. This research is dedicated to find out those symptoms among professional social workers and catch similarities and differences. And of course, analyze deep possible reasons of it (Stocchetti, N., Segre, G., Zanier, E. R, Zanetti, M., Campi, R., Scarpellini, F., lavenna, A., 2021). Talking about professional incompetence from the angle of relationship with the rest of the two dimensions of job burnout sometimes can happen that reduced professional incompetence is the part of others like a function. As some researchers also assume from the concept by itself if a person is suffering from emotional exhaustion or depersonalization it is more likely that person also is feeling reduced professional accomplishment. Most of the time if a worker is feeling exhausted and has also faced a stage of depersonalization so she/he might already have or soon will have indifferent feelings towards work and people around (Maslach, C., Shaufeli, W. B., Leiter, M., 2001).

The theoretical connection goes from emotional exhaustion to role-related stress. From several studies in this field, it is getting clear that most of the time persons emotional exhaustion is depended on the level of stress she/he has at the workplace (Maslach, C., Shaufeli, W. B., Leiter, M., 2001). Accordingly comes the result of this work. There is a higher possibility of inappropriate actions taking place in professional life. While talking about role-related stress it is noteworthy to mention the main characteristics of it. These are role conflict, overload and ambiguity. In *Figure 1* is visible that three of these dimensions are directly connected and accordingly affects the main role stress and this last one by itself have a huge impact on persons emotional stage (Kim, H., Stoner, M., 2008).
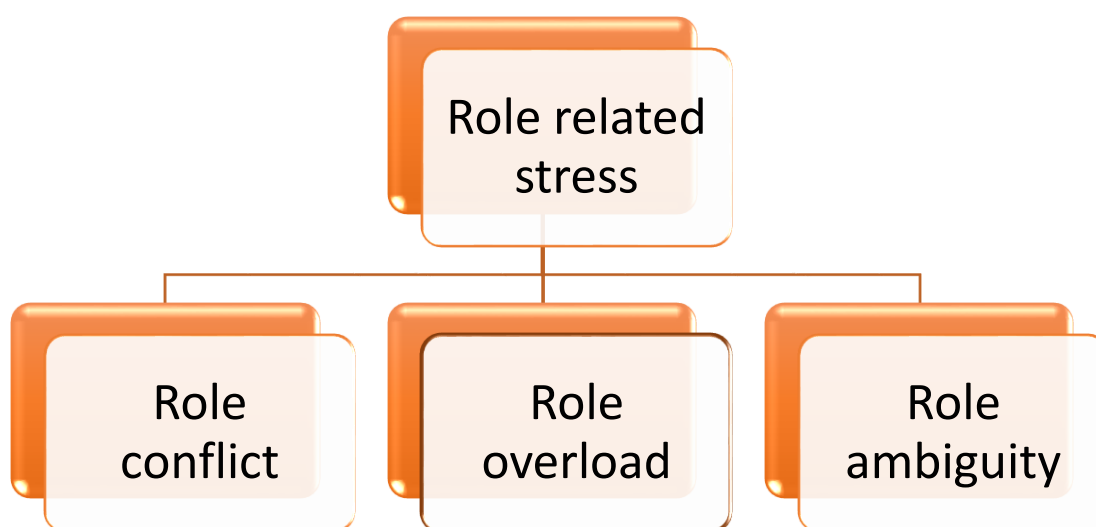
Figure 1. Dimensions of Role stress

As about role stress being closely related to emotional exhaustion same concept is working between another dimension of burnout Professional Achievement (same as Professional incompetence PI) and job autonomy. In this case, the decreased amount of autonomy at the workplace causes feelings of professional incompetence in person (Maslach, C., Shaufeli, W. B., Leiter, M., 2001). Job autonomy by itself can be expressed in different ways such as being involved in decision making at the job (Kim, H., Stoner, M., 2008).

After analyzing different researches and articles about burnout syndrome noticed that the reasons causing it are very important to discuss and also find out if there is any correlation between the reason and the way we can deal with it. The reasons that might cause professional burnout can be several at the same time or just for that exact case. These reasons are organizational, interpersonal, individual, and role conflict (Gudžinskienė, V., Pozdniakovas, A. , 2020). All of them are the results of not responded long least conflict. Since burnout itself is the stress syndrome resulted from chronic exposure to job stress. The importance of researched dimensions of job burnout syndrome is a great big step forward in this aspect, because of the possibility to analyze the development of each dimension and match it into the model. *"The phase model proposed that each of these three dimensions is split into high and low scores so that all possible combinations of the three-dimension resulted in eight patterns or phases of burnout"* (Maslach, C., Shaufeli, W. B., Leiter, M., 2001) It is important to mention that the phase model is not the only one that is agreed upon and conducted in every study. There are some researchers who prefer other models while analyzing job burnout. For instance, according to another moel, these three dimensions can be also hypothesized and progressed over time. So there is a relevant link between these dimensions and they are the development of each other. This model claims that during job burnout emotional exhustion comes first and it is developing into depersonalization and after it ends with inefficiency as we already mentioned it is the same as a reduced personal achievement (Maslach, C., Shaufeli, W. B., Leiter, M., 2001).

To summarize, taking into account dimensions of professional burnout plays one of the main roles when it comes to coping with it. From the nature of each dimension can be recognized the ways of preventing this syndrome. Since each case and individual is different when it comes to professional burnout these dimensions can be considered as a frame of the main characteristics of job burnout.

1.3. Symptoms of professional burnout

As already mentioned above, while coping with professional burnout, identification is the one big step forward and this we can make by pointing some symptoms that can be the characteristic for this syndrome. It is not very easy to put an exact border between the symptoms of professional burnout and other syndromes or diseases. The reason for it is that they might be very similar to each other and hard to conceptualize in one syndrome (McLean, H. L., Wilburn, R. , 1991). These dimensions are the combined results of several symptoms that occurred prior to the beginning stages of the syndrome. This chapter will be described and analyzed the most common characteristics of professional burnout according to the research paper "the problem of professional burnout in stress management" by N. Makasheva, J. Makasheva, A. Gromova, S. Ishtunov, B. Burykhin. Some characteristics of job burnout can be the development of other or logical links between each symptom. While discussing each of them it is important to note that in this study they are divided into subgroups according to the competencies. These groups are: Psycho-physical, Social psychological, and behavioral (Makasheva, N., Makasheva, J., Gromava, A., Ishtunov, S., Burykhin, B., 2016). To discuss separately each of them, lets start from a group of psycho-physical symptoms: chronic fatigue during the day, feeling of physical and emotional exhaustion often, decrease of energy, loss of interest in any news happening around (it can be positive or negative news), Being tired all day long (McLean, H. L., Wilburn, R. , 1991). From the group of social and psychological symptoms, there might be signs of boredom, depression, indifference feeling towards the actions happening around, being irritated by the minor events, failure in communication, feeling guilty or ashamed while doing daily routine, having a high level of anxiety and experiencing negative attitude for anything connected to work. Behavioural symptoms on the other hand are leaded by following signs:the feeling that the work is getting harder and harder. So dealing with even small tasks in daily routine getting more complicated and problematic. This type of symptom is also considered the changes in working routine. For example, some people in this condition might request for more or opposite to it less working hours and tasks to do. In this case, it depends on the nature of the person (Jiang, H., Wang, Y., Chui, E., Xu, Y., 2019). Another sign is very significant in behavioral symptoms since it catches small but important enough tasks from a person's life. When she/he insists to take work at home several times but at the end never completes this task. Also can be a sign of doing most of the work tasks automatically not the conscious way, without even realizing the meaning of it. Usually, these tasks are the basic, elementary actions that do not really

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play a big role in a person's productivity. And the last point from behavioral symptoms is the desire to keep distance from colleagues (Makasheva, N., Makasheva, J., Gromava, A., Ishtunov, S., Burykhin, B., 2016). In this stage desire to distance, oneself can be a result of social workers stressful environment or the feeling that there is no one around to discuss his/her feelings (Gudzinskiene, V. ,Sinkuniene, J. R., Pozdniakovas, A. , 2021).

While talking about the symptoms of burnout syndrome it is very interesting to mention that most of the researchers advise different ordered stages of how are the symptoms developing. the connection between dimensions and symptoms is clear in every step. The generalization of this approach can outline that basic stages of burnout are more likely to follow this sequence. the first stage is explained as high expectations on one's job. Accordingly, it is expressed when in reality there are fewer resources for professionals than they need or require. Later it can increase in feelings for the person that this job does not satisfy his/her expectations that were set from the beginning (Korunka, C., Tement, S., Zdrehus, C., Borza, A.,).

In the second stage person already faces physical or emotional exhaustion that is also one of the dimensions of professional burnout (Maslach, C., Leiter, M., 2007). In this stage it is common for that person experiences insomnia, headache, also sometimes there are occasions of inclination towards job to take more responsibilities and start with a high level of energy. All these symptoms come together with chronic exhaustion. Another aspect second stage is emotional exhaustion by itself, which covers the conditions of a person when she/he does get the negative feeling even while thinking about the job (Korunka, C., Tement, S., Zdrehus, C., Borza, A.,). Depersonalization same as cynicism comes in the third stage and refers to symptoms like apathy, boredom and depression that can continue to the not desirable relationships with people around. For example coworkers, patients, family members, friends (Maslach, C., Leiter, M. P. , 2018). According to this categorization fourth and the last stage represents the condition of a worker when there is no sign of hope accordingly she/he is suffering from anger and depending on occasion can be expressed towards someone or herself/himself. In this stage, it is common to have a hopeless feeling of productiveness (Korunka, C., Tement, S., Zdrehus, C., Borza, A.,). From the analysis, these sources are significant to mention that even though researchers offer different types of ordering in terms of burnout symptoms some characteristics are repeated for several studies and point out an important sequence in this regard (Korunka, C., Tement, S., Zdrehus, C., Borza, A.,).

The symptoms of burnout might often be mixed with symptoms of stress, depression because there are much similarities and at the same time each person experiences different and unique mix

of symptoms. It can consider the reason why dealing with bournout and at least identification of this syndrome is so hard (McLean, H. L., Wilburn, R. , 1991) Analyzing all this theoretical information about professional burnout symptoms can lead to the thoughts that even early identification of signs might not be beneficial regarding coping with this syndrome. The complexity of the issue makes harder the ways of prevention. Since all of them dimensions, symptoms, and reasons should be considered particularly and with correlation to each other (McLean, H. L., Wilburn, R. , 1991). Regardless person's own experience and history while going through the burnout process him/her individually at the same time it is influential for organizations were working as well. Since our daily activities make changes not only in our life but everyone around. Considering all these symptoms of job burnout we analyze already it is not hard to assume that for organizations worker is feeling emotional exhaustion, has lost interest in job-related activities, also facing anxiety and any other symptoms of professional burnout than it is getting issue for organizations as well (Endriulaitiene, E., Marksaityte, R., Žardeckaitė-Matulaitienė, K., Pranckeviciene, A., 2016). Take an example of China, where some organizations are facing the problem of recruitment and retention of social workers because of the high risk of burnout syndrome (Lazo, F. J. F., Cano, I. C. M., Coronel, A. A. R.,, 2021).

To summarise the main findings of this subchapter should start from the division symptoms during professional burnout according to the nature of each of them. Can be revised in three big groups and it gives the possibility of conceptualizing them better. Defining symptoms when it comes to any type of disease or even a problem is a very significant part. As it got clear from the literature review in terms of professional burnout identification and taking action according to it is the biggest challenge.

1.4. The ways of preventing professional burnout

In terms of coping with any kind of problem and in this case, the syndrome of professional burnout it is very important to know the meaning of it and what are the main symptoms. Identification of the problem is the first challenge and later it comes to find ways of preventing it. This part of the work will be described ways of prevention by different authors and researchers.

According to the main aim, while planning steps towards the prevention of professional burnout approaches might be different. For example, if one is more eager to prevent burnout because mainly wants better performance at work by professionals then it is the work-directed approach.

Since in this case, the main interest of the applied criteria comes from work-related reasons. In the other hand there are ways to prevent burnout syndrome which are more person-directed ("Learn to prevent and deal with burnout effect", 2012-2014). Both of these approaches will be analyzed more in detail in this subchapter in order to get a closer look at the ways of prevention professional burnout. To start from a person-centered approach. It means that the ways that can be beneficial in order to prevent or reduce professional burnout, are coming from the individuals by themselves, who are facing this syndrome (Maslach, C., Goldberg, J., 1998). Some examples from the individualistic view of strategies can be a person's desire to get a different target in terms of relationship to the job if it is needed t change daily tasks at work or the ways of working. Other strategy might be to empower a person by creating a less stressful environment around and encourage good health condition (Maslach, C., Goldberg, J., 1998).

Another type of approach is analyzed by Maslach and Goldberg is situation centered. It comes together with work-directed strategies ("Learn to prevent and deal with burnout effect", 2012-2014). It means that burnout syndrome is getting interested in organizations since people inside it are facing this issue so work is concerned to find ways to prevent it. All aspects and proposed ways lead to the concern that organizations are trying not to lose the productivity of workers. At this level usually, use Supervision or intervision. The chart below represents the types of startegies which can be applied in terems of supervison and intervision [see *Figure 2*] ("Learn to prevent and deal with burnout effect", 2012-2014)

Supervision
- Supporting group
- Psychoterapeutic action programs
- Psycho education
- Teaching of positive strategies focused
- Self-care

Intervision
- Low-threshold Interapy program
- Health genetic approach
- Cognitive behavioural trainings
- Progamme based psycho-syntesis
- time management
- mindfulness based programe
- Counselling techniques
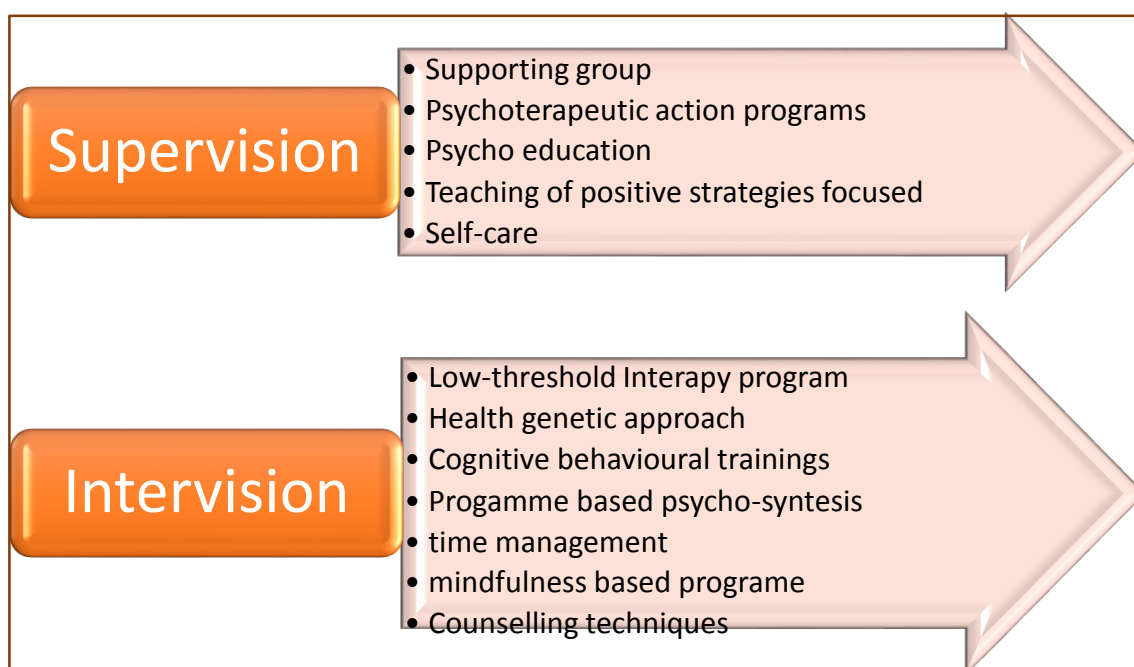
Figure 2: Types of Strategies in terms of Supervision and Intervision

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There is a big part depending on colleagues when it comes to preventing ways of burnout syndrome. Showing moral and emotional support to each other is much appreciated in this regard. At the workplace having a hope of getting this kind of support is pretty much dependent on the atmosphere at work by itself. Since the quality of relationships plays important role in this case (Gudžinskienė, V., Pozdniakovas, A., Šinkūnienė, J. R., 2021).

Another way of preventing burnout can be considered as mutual support groups for social workers because the main aim of such activity is to give the possibility to social workers to help each other. Especially when it comes to crisis situations like Covid-19 sharing positive or negative outcomes from each other's practice can be useful, if all that will be in an organized way (Cabiati, E., 2021).

Supervision is a great tool used in social work practice that gives the possibility to a person who is willing to improve his/her work or life condition and on the other hand to the person who is eager to give needed help to a people (Hughes, J. M , 2010). Since one of the main purposes of supervision is to help overcome anxiety and maintain professional needs in terms of coping with burnout or at least identify its symptoms is worthy to pay attention to.

To sum up, about the ways of preventing burnout syndrome can say that all these advised techniques are really important to pay attention to and choose according to the need. It got clear that for particular cases we should consider that first need analyze of nature of a situation and then choose the way or several ways. It also depends on the stage of burnout of course. So in terms of preventing like some other dimensions in this study is better to understand in correlation with symptoms and the characteristics of the syndrome.

2. SOCIAL WORKERS IN LITHUANIA, CONTEXT OF COVID-19

In this Chapter will be described and analyzed they way of social work development in Lithuania, Which stages it came from and what was the main characteristics form each of them. Later will be short history of Covid-19 pandemic since it is quite new stage of our lives and at the end of the chapter will be discussion about the professional social workers during Covid-19.

2.1. **Development of social work in Lithuania**

The roots of developing social work in Lithuania leads to the collapse of Soviet Union (Snieškienė, D.), unlikely from socialist countries in Europe. Because in those countries some movements in this scope of work have been started before World War 2. After getting independence from the Soviet Union started development of social work and was going rapidly (Bagdonas, A.). The meaning behind these rapid changes is that there was a great need for development in this scope of work. At the same time, there were examples of other countries in Europe had some achievement in terms of social work. So Lithuania had to catch up with them. During this important time were founded support and charity organizations, later appeared study courses of social work in several Lithuanian universities, as well as the creation of social workers association (Snieškienė, D.). In his article (Bagdonas, A.) author calls this period, early 20th century the *"Century of social work development"* and he mentions that even though fro the meaning of the concept of social work is supposed to be organized at a governmental level like social welfare, from the beginning it was just individual altruistic initiatives of people. More inertial by its character than planned ones (Bagdonas, A.). As is already mentioned above, most of the changes in the history of social work were happening after the end of the Soviet Union, it is significant to mention that there were some similar actions taking part a long time ago as well. To get a clear picture of developing this profession in Lithuania better to get the concept of dividing it into stages according to the changes that were happening during the exact period of time. According to this concept first stage which is the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the union with Poland, by the time frame, it covers the period until 1794, and steps towards creating the social work profession can be considered first asylums and Commission of Hospices (Bagdonas, A.). Second is the 1794-1918 years the time when Lithuania was under the occupation of the Tsarist, during this period was common natural family-type support,

charity, and care. After this started the stage of interwar independence which matches the period of restoration, re-establishment of Grand Duchy of Lithuania (Eiditas, A., Bumbkauskas, A., Kulakauskas, A., Tamosaitis, M.,, 2015) this period lasted from 1918-1940 years. During this stage, most of the charity actions were provided by the church and was the beginning period of creating NGO's (Bagdonas, A.). Later during 1940 -1990 takes part, the model of Soviet social security and more specifically: segregation, medicalization, and institutionalization. This last aspect will become the main object of changes later after the end of the Soviet Union (History of social work in Lithuania, 2015). The fifth stage starts from 1990 and finishes in two years in 1992. This is two years period when formal acceptance of the notion of social work happened. It was mainly characterized by the reform in social security direction. Only after 1990 and until 2002 occurred the stage of professionalization of social work, meaning that officially got the legal basis, first certification in this scope of work happened and was the boom of academic perspective of this profession (Bagdonas, A.). The last stage refers to the period from 2002 until today when municipalities are willing to organize different types of social services as well as create a legal framework for social work that is helpful for professionals in this regard and last and significant of this stage is the training which is organized by multiple institutes in order to increase the knowledge among professionals or just for society. (History of social work in Lithuania, 2015). Analyzing the history of social work in Lithuania it is getting clear how important is individual initiatives to make real changes (Snieškienė, D.).

Even if these steps do not seem so big or significant from the beginning. The development of the social work profession in this country is a good example of how it was coming from people's needs and in another hand desire to be better citizens and they started different kinds of charity movements. Especially at the time of transition from one platform to another, this would make big difference and later will require more and more steps forward in terms of developing the profession.

2.2. Development of Covid-19

In order to analyze the context of COVID-19, will define that it is pandemic-disease which affects a large number of people and is spread in multiple countries and continents (Intermountain Heathcare, 2020). While defining the concept of pandemic is important to know the main features of it. [see *Figure 3*] (Qiu, W., Rutherford, S., Mao, A., Chu, A., 2017) In this case Covid-19 pandemic will be analyzed according to these features below in this subchapter.
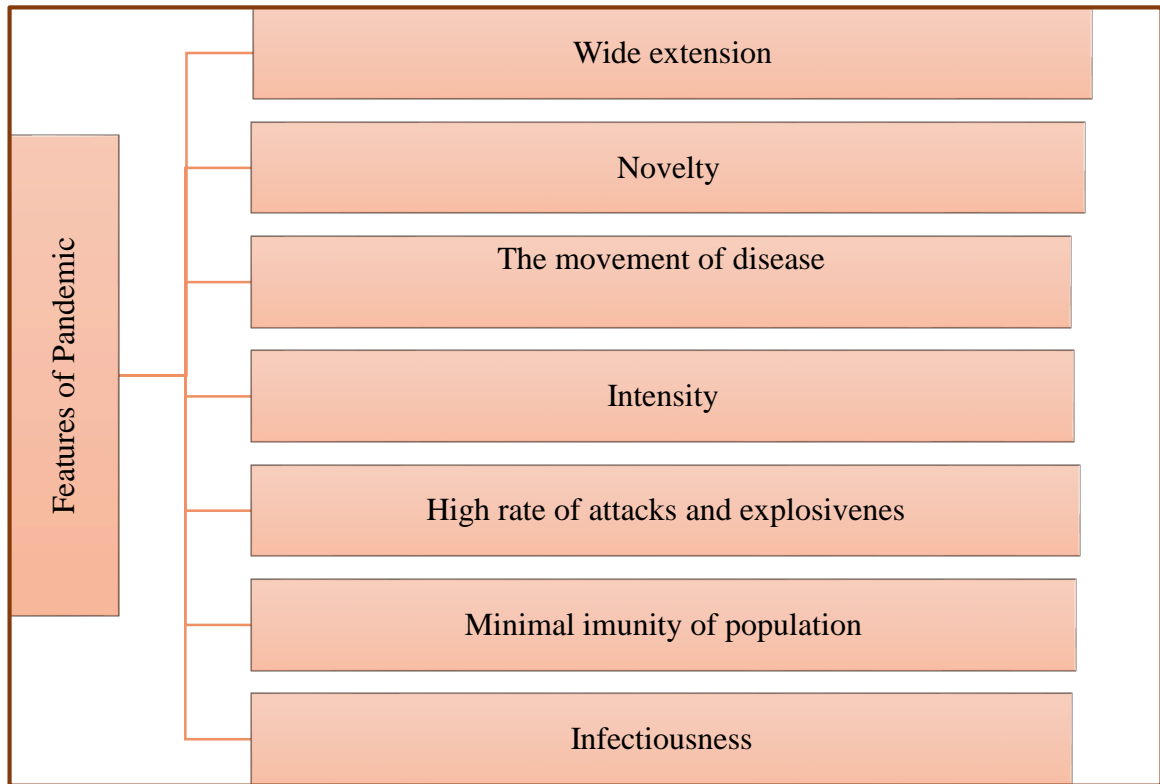
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Figure 3: Features of Pandemic.

As it is known our world is facing one of the biggest challenges in our history and it is very crucial for everyone to stay strong during this time. Social workers together with all people working in the human service sector are in the risk group of facing professional stress and burnout (Llod, C., King, R., Chnoweth, L. , 2011) This is profession which imposes worker's particular stressors which are connected and adjusted in their jobs as it is based on worker and client interaction, type of job. (Kim, H., Stoner, M., 2008) Overcome all the problems and issues and face the reality which is already different from what used to know and it is more likely that it will change more and more as time passes.

It is known COVID-19 is the fifth pandemic after the 1918 year of a flu pandemic. From official information, what we have, for now, This pandemic started from Wuhan city, In China, at the end of December 2019 (Liu,Y.-C., Kuo, R., Shih, S. R., 2020) and now it is spread to all over the world. Around 182 million cases have been confirmed according to the today's data (Coronavirus update, 2021). but this number increases very fast. It changes life of all people around the world and still going on with unwanted expectations for the future. Since this pandemic is

affecting us physically and mentally, and social workers by the meaning of it, are responsible for their patients mental and physical condition. (What is Social Work, 2020).

As for any life experience that human faces there are something important to teach and assimilate, there were and still remains emerged important facts that the Covid-19 pandemic will teach us as a society and as well each of us individually. One of them got clear from the first days of the pandemic. It is the meaning of health condition, After being in front of this big problem our society start appreciating the importance of health. Wellbeing become a new demand for each person since pandemics gave people a chance to notice how much is depending on this aspect of our life (Shukla, D. , 2021). In terms of developing the Covid-19 pandemic, there have been different stages for each country specifically and as well various types of approaches depending on countries policy for that time. From the perspective of analyzing the general truth that Covid -19 is still the biggest challenge in our reality can be said that there is no one and unique example of policy or rule that worked or will work for every country, society (Lourenço, R. A. , 2020). One of these policy examples that are also in close relation to the need of social workers is the social distancing during Covid-19. Since the nature of disease claims the negative effect of social interactions face-to-face. During pandemic social distancing perspective took a significant place in daily life order (Gupta, R., Dhamija, R. K , 2020). It will be a noteworthy fact to know how were they living and facing problems by themselves, During professional activities and their personal life, during this hard time. Analyzing articles about professional burnout of social workers leads to the main point, most of the sources approve that social workers are experiencing a high level of stress at work in everyday life (Rohling, L., 2016). It is a new challenge to find out the effect of a pandemic on this vulnerable group. Not only for mental and physical health became issues during Covid-19 but also people's private data. Pandemic fasten the process for several platforms to make their service in online trace and because of high need of all type of services during Covid-19 went online, for example, online shopping, cause a great need for online transactions, purchases. For these platforms, there are some fields that where individuals are pushed to fill by their private data. The importance of the digital economy, which was developing with slow steps before growing really fast during the Covid-19 period. At first sight, it might look like an advantage but at some point for a lot of countries, this became an issue in terms of the not well protected private information of their residents (Rana, O., Llanos, J., Carr, M., 2021).

During this process of developing Covid-19, there were several restrictions or measurements depending on the stage and condition of the country or region but there are general

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tasks that have been recommended by healthcare specialists in order to prevent the spread of the virus. These measures cover hand washing, social distance, wearing facemasks. Since now there are some companies already providing us with vaccines, this aspect has also been added to those measurements to prevent the spreading of coronavirus (Amiri, A. S., Akram, M. , 2020).

To summarize this subchapter there are several patterns already expressed in daily life regarding the Covid-19 that has been changed and requires adaptation from us as well. It has been already two years since the beginning of the pandemic which caused significant changes not only personal but at local and international levels as well. There have been some characteristics for a specific time frame during these two years that was forcing society to follow exact restrictions or rules. Since we are still in front of this problem in our life there is a continuous process of changes for us.

2.3. Social workers routine during Covid-19

Social workers are considered as a group of professionals, experiencing stress and burnout in high level. The reason can be multiple but in general can be mentioned that, the nature of social work by itself. Since professionals in this field are working in human service and being involved in complex social situations (Llod, C., King, R., Chnoweth, L. , 2011). Most of the people find it difficult to follow all the newly formatted rules and change their life according to it. One of the important aspect in this regard is job.

In terms of similarity, there are some characteristics between crisis situations for healthcare professionals lie social workers. Regardless of the time difference and the main point of a crisis there are some aspects that can be repeated for example to compare influenza pandemic, fro 1918 and Covi-19 from nowadays there are general assumptions for example that all these types of crises outline the vulnerability of individuals and importance of physical and mental health (Farakas,K. J., Romaniuk, J. R. , 2020).

To analyze what kind of challenges do social workers have during pandemic, should generalize the reasons what can cause the stress and burnout in Social work field. There are some assumptions between several scholars that Social work from its concept is already doomed to be stressful job (Llod, C., King, R., Chnoweth, L. , 2011) According to the article ''Social Work, stress and burnout: A review'' by Chris Lloyd, Robert King, Leslie Chenoweth, there are several possible reasons of why Social workers are more likely to have depression and burnout during professional

activities. It can be a pressure not to be judgmental as professional ethic requires from social workers, handle all emotional difficulties caused by having a close relationship with a different type of personalities, it might also be a mismatch with Social Work ideals, difficulties in personal life and etc. The reasons as we can see can be multiple and very different from each other. One can consider that listed reasons sounds like stress and does not apply on burnout, but in this regard, it is known that when these processes are prolonged in time without any recognition and dimension it can turn into the burnout (Kim, H., 2008).

The great need for professional social workers emerged in reality after the first negative outcomes of Covid-19., expressed in several types of groups of people (Isangha,S. O., Choi, W. M. A., Chiu, M. Yu L., , 2021). Considering all levels that social workers cover in their professional demands Panbdemic make it necessary to be more flexible and able to adapt to changes that happened from the beginning of Covid-19. In this case, social workers were people who needed to react rapidly to any minor changes that appeared since they might be effective on different micro, mezzo or macro level allocated issues in society (Ashcroft, R., Greenblatt, A., Sur, D., Donahue, P., 2021). Clearly, there are a lot of aspects and reasons why the pandemic situations became a big challenge for social workers and as well cause many issues in their professional life (Ashcroft, R., Greenblatt, A., Sur, D., Donahue, P., 2021).

Since it got clear from the concept of burnout that professionals occur in this condition mainly because of difficulties, it means that difficulties are the reason for the syndrome by itself. While talking about the difficulties should define the exact meaning behind it. The review of literature can outline some of the demands for professional social workers, such as the shortage of workers that forces professionals to work in several directions besides their own tasks. Another aspect is the amount of paperwork, in this case, the growing amount of paperwork that social workers have to deal with, by spending more and more time on this particular part of his/her job. Also should not forget the possibility of unmanageable cases and since the meaning of social work is doomed from the beginning for working with difficult cases, there is a high possibility of occurring issues with difficult clients (Kim, H., 2008). Another important factor of professional social workers is the amount of social support they are getting at their workplace. Accordingly, if this amount is less than needed so the possibility of professional burnout is higher. it is noteworthy to mention that social support at the workplace can be expressed differently depending on the nature of organization, managers and a case by itself but in general.3 (Gudžinskienė, V., Pozdniakovas, A., Šinkūnienė, J. R., 2021) Social workers role during pandemics became more and more considerable because the

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number of vulnerable people were and still are increasing at this point. There are several characteristics in this terms of changes, as changes in social workers activities and one of them was affected by the need of being an online platform. From the beginning of pandemic when it comes to isolation or general social distance social workers face the need of having extra resources in their professional activities to be more innovative and engageable when it comes to adapt new reality (Bacter, C., Săvean, S., Marc, C. , 2021).

Another and also quite important aspect is the health condition of social workers by itself. Since pandemic, first of all, is pointed on everyone's well being accordingly we need doctors, nurses, social workers and other front line workers to help overcome damage Covid-19 bring. At this point do not have to forget that these professionals are always in great need of good health as well. There is the possibility of their physical or mental breakdown during hard times like This pandemic. As we already know society meet this pandemic quite unprepared in terms of information as well so for Social workers as well there is a need for guidance, training or any other type of support (Ashcroft, R., Greenblatt, A., Sur, D., Donahue, P., 2021)

From the perspective of changes, several aspects of Covid-19 can be considered as controversial event because of its nature. Considering that many aspects has been changed during this tme for social workers and these changes cause different type of challenges or issues (Tranca, L. M. , 2021). There is generalized aspects from several challenges that has been outlined for social workers who are working during Covid-19 on *Figure 4* (Tranca, L. M. , 2021).
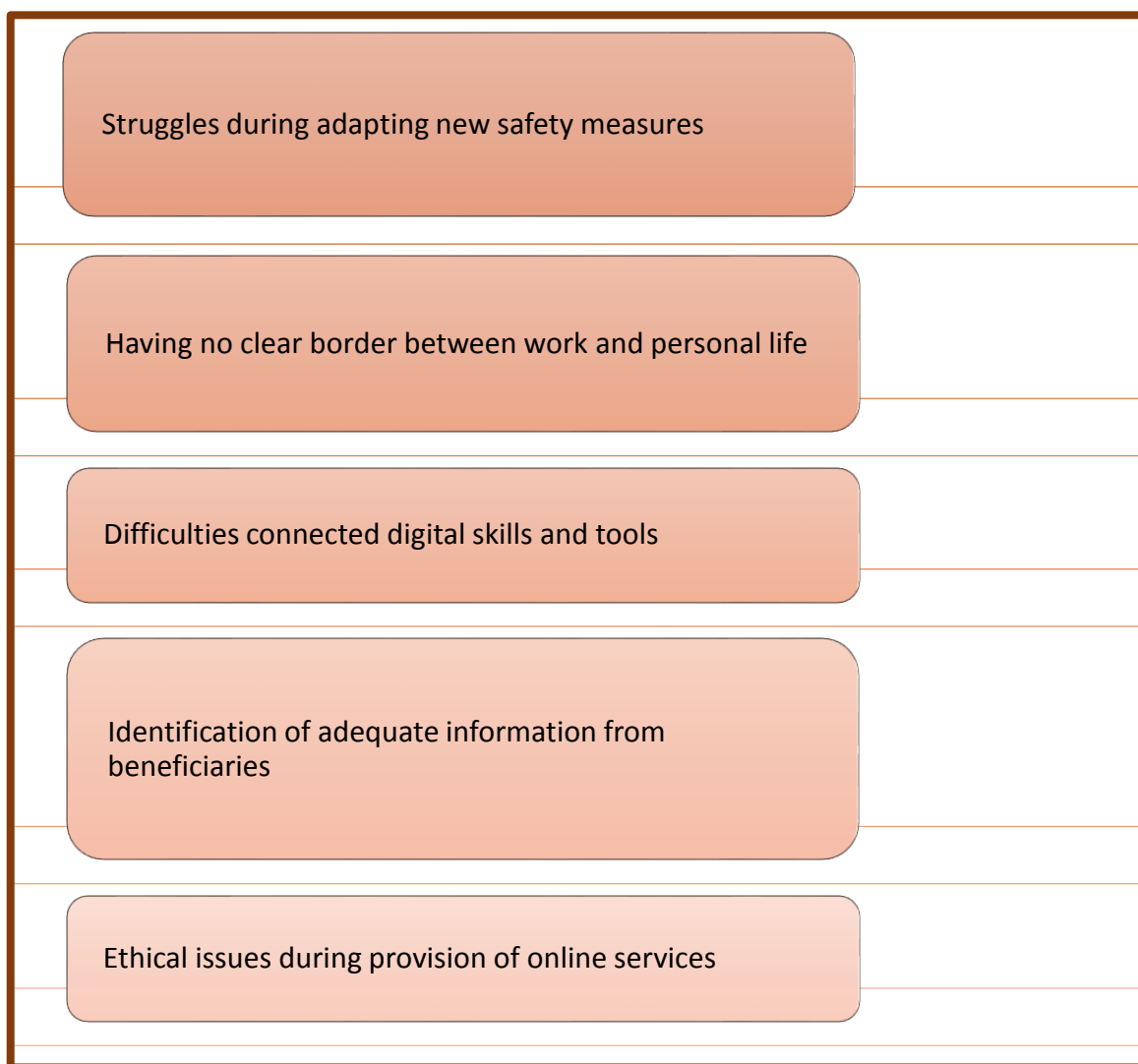
Figure 4. Challenges that social workers face during Covid-19.

To take a closer look at these challenges that is shown above should describe each of them more in detail and realize why it could be an issue for social workers. The first one in this list is the struggles during adaptation to the new safety measures that have been taken while the formation of pandemic (Sama, G. R., Matulic, V., Pascual, A. M., Vicente, I. , 2020). Social workers from different directions and organizations of this profession are in front of the constant rapid changes that take place during a pandemic. They need to make sure that at the workplace while communicating with beneficiaries they keep all safety measurements in order and at the same time provide service smooth. Sometimes overcoming the results that are caused al these restrictions get too intense and might lead to a conflicting relationship between social worker and beneficiaries (Tranca, L. M. , 2021).

The next aspect is the challenge of putting a clear line between work and personal life. Social workers are often struggling by themselves to stop giving their professional advice in their free time and especially when it comes to the situations like Covid-19. When they are helping not only their beneficiaries but also their family members, friends and themselves (Farakas,K. J., Romaniuk, J. R. , 2020). Since social workers were providing their service online it became challenging to get exact working hours. They were not going physically at work and it gives beneficiaries thoughts that social worker is available when they want and do not have an understanding of specific working hours. It causes the disturbance during not working hours (Tranca, L. M. , 2021).

Challenges connected to digital tools and skills are also considered in terms of the time when services were supposed to be provided according to the social distance reality. In some cases, social workers have been struggled even to have an access to essential services (Dauti, M., Dhëmbo, E., Bejko, E., 2020). It is also important that for social workers it was and in some cases still is a big issue that not everyone is equipped with essential digital tools like computers, smartphones, laptops or etc. So they can not receive the service needed. Another point in this regard is the knowledge of these digital skills that is a must to know while working during social distance from home (Cabiati, E., 2021).

Another challenge that social workers have experienced during pandemics is the difficulties connected to the identification of adequate information from their beneficiaries because the online platforms that have been used during communication give the possibility to talk and have a camera off or be visible just some parts of the body. It faces us to the reality when there are fewer possibilities to notice informants emotions or other important signals. Face-to-face communication is hard to replace by such online platforms when there is a great need for details that might be a reason for several consequences (Hung, E. N., Lee, T. T.T ., Cheung, J. C. S , 2021). This point is also included also the issues connected to confidentiality. Since sometimes while having communication with beneficiaries online social workers notice that the informant is not alone at home so there might be some details missing from her/his information since they do not feel comfortable enough in that environment (Tranca, L. M. , 2021).

During a pandemic, some measurements regarding the social lives became extremely important that had an important before as well but Covid-19 shove towards it. One of them can be considered ethics because of the completely new reality social workers face the need of adaptation into regulations in terms of respecting human rights and social justice. There is a great need for new aspects for ethical practice and social workers should gather all this information together with

different circles of institutions for example international agencies, government, associations that have an experience in this profession (Banks, S., Cai, T., Jonge, E. de., Shears, J., Shum, M., Sobočan, A. M., Strom, K., Truell, M., Úriz, M. J., Weinberg, M., 2020).

In conclusion, there are several issues that social workers already have experienced in their professional life in terms of Covid-19 regulations. By analyzing all this theoretical information from the different sources it is getting more clear why and how exactly can these challenges affect social workers daily activities and become the reason for the disturbance.

3. PROFESIONAL BURNOUT OF SOCIAL WORKERS IN LITHUANIA DURING COVID-19, EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

In this part of the master thesis will be provided information about research methodology and how it is being organized. As well as introduction and analysis of collected data.

3.1. Research methodology and organization

Type of research chosen for this study is qualitative research methodology. As this type of study gives the possibility to analyze the problems and issues deeply (Kumar, R., 2011).

qualitative research helps to analyze social or human problems. It is significant to mention that researcher has the possibility to make interpretations of collected data, Give assumptions about its meaning. For this work using qualitative research is very important since it gives the opportunity to look at the researched problem from inductive style and be focused on individual meaning. Since this work is dedicated to understanding the phenomena of burnout of professional social workers during Covid-19 so can be assumed that the social constructivist worldview will have a big influence while doing qualitative research on this topic which clearly refers to understand the situation in our reality. As researcher will try to leave a wide range of possible answers and discussions for participants in order to give them the opportunity to express their ideas and point of view for each and every topic. This is very important to understand how is seen from the respondents' side. Is concerned more about giving freedom to express opinions and not tries to put them in borders of some theory (Creswell, J.W., Creswell, J. D., 2021). Study professional burnout of social workers, helping with this type of research, gives the possibility to describe the ongoing condition of professionals from their point of view.

Since the nature of semi-structured interviews gives the possibility of making minor changes during the interview process and can ask additional questions in case the respondent has not covered the important topics from the prepared list of interview questions (Creswell, J.W., Creswell, J. D., 2021).

Sampling method Judgmental is chosen For this research topic, ''professional burnout of social workers in the context of the Covid-19" sampling method Judgmental is chosen, as

judgmental sampling gives opportunity develop findings of the research topic and it is mostly used in qualitative researches (Kumar, R., 2011). according to the specification of the thesis, it requires the exact group of people to be searched for. That is the reason, why the non-probability sampling technique and a more precise judgment sampling procedure will be most appropriate. Judgmental sampling means that an auditor can choose sample according to their own experience or accessibility in this regard. Since it will be more reliable to collect information exactly from social workers because they are the main characters of the research topic (Taherdoost, H., 2016).

Ethics of the research. Personal permission of the informants to take part in the research was sought. The researchers obliged themselves to the research participants not to divulge the information related to the organisation and the informant. The principles of anonymity, volunteerism and benevolence were followed. In this research ethical issues have been identified: The possibility of cause harm to participants and confidentiality. As topic is sensitive and requires high awareness and carefulness of interviewer in order not to make respondent uncomfortable, during the process of collecting data. Confidentiality, because data will be collected among one profession representatives and since this scope of work is quite small and presented information can be recognizable for the people who have connection to Social work field (Kumar, R., 2011). The study was conducted by following ethical standards. All informants have been treated with respect and free from any type of prejudice. Research participants have been informed in advance and been introduced to the tic and the nature of the thesis accordingly only their wish to participate or not in the study has been considered. The researcher explained the aim of the study and outline the meaning of their participation in it. Research participants were informed that the data collected will not be available to any person not connected to this study ([BERA], 2018). In order to ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of informants performed in this study. Personal data has been presented using codes like In-1, In-2....., In-5.

The study was conducted in the October-November of 2021 in the among social workers from different directions of this profession, in Lithuania. Within research, interviews have been done among five social workers who are working in different directions of this profession in Lithuania. Another criterion was that professional social workers should have at least two years of experience in this field. More details about respondents can be seen in *Table 1.*

Code	Age	Experience in Social work (years)	Experience in this organization (years)
In-1	35	2,5	2,5
In-2	24	3	2
In-3	26	4	1
In-4	23	2,9	2,9
In-5	27	2,5	2,5

Table 1: Coding of respondents from research

Data collective technic used in this qualitative research is interviewing. The instrument is an individual semi-structured interview; Interviews have been conducted both face to face and online (Via Zoom). In the case of the In-1 and In-3 interview was face to face and the rest of the respondents prefer the online platform due to the increased number of Covid-19 cases. Qualitative data collecting technic is chosen because research topic requires description, it is mostly about feelings and emotions (Dudovskiy, J., n.d.) which cannot be measured in numbers. The duration of the interviews was from 30 min to 50 min.   Research method of this study is semi-structured interviews, as an interviewer I had an interview guide, serving as a checklist of topics to be covered. This guide is based on topics and sub-topics, where questions are built around. (Innovation, Wageningen Centre for Development, 2012) Using this technique will help me to go to the depth of research area and collect information about how was social worker's life during a pandemic, what changes they faced during this time and get more about their feelings and emotions. The goal during interviews is to establish balanced rapport and make a comfortable environment during the interview which will help them to open up around the research topic. One of the main goals is to let interviewee lead the conversation's most part. Questions for semi structured interview with social workers is shown in *Annex 1*. Questions for research interviews have been chosen according to the analysis of the theoretical part. The main for this study has been stressed out and formulated into categories and subcategories of questions *Annex 2.*

Data analysis for This master thesis is used qualitative research and more specific, content analysis. Since the topic is about professional burnout of social workers during COVID-19 and data is collected through the interviews with social workers. So the best way to analyze information will be content analysis, which gives the possibility to put collected data according to some classification and summarization (Sunday, C. E.). For data validation will be make sure and keep track of all respondents are interviewed or not, will choose them according to research criteria, A criteria-based

sample was used in the study. The informants (social workers) were chosen according to the following criteria:

1) Social workers living in Lithuania.

2) social workers who have a degree in the area of social work;

3) have not less than 2-year experience related to social work.

4) have been working in their scope of work during Covid-19.

3.2. Research data analysis

Since qualitative content analysis gives the possibility to categorize collected data and present it in correlation with different sources. In order to achieve the main goal of the study will be used conventional content analysis. Using this method will allow the description of the emotions and phenomena of the research topic from informants through primary interviews (Hsieh, H.F., Shannon, S. E., 2005). This subchapter will be analyze collected information from conducted interviews. The main goal is to divide described content and classify it into smaller subchapters that will give the possibility of a deeper understanding of each topic.

3.2.1. Social workers life during Covid-19

Covid-19 caused the crisis not only in healthcare terms but at the same time regarding multiple directions of the social aspect. From the nature of work, social workers are one of those professionals whose actions on a daily basis affects different needs of society. Since Covid-19 is considered one of those changes that cause multiple changes in people's life, social workers were reminded as professionals who should perform according to the specification of issues like it was happening before the pandemic. The needs of Society that they would require from social workers are several, like evaluation of the problem, coordination, intervention, assistance, supervision and etc (Faura, J. G. , 2020).

During pandemic social workers as many other scopes of work started to move from face-to-face to online work. Depending on the type of organizations they were using different types of programmes during this time. One of the definitive of these changes nature was the exact aim of

Social workers by itself or the type of group she/he use to work with (Dauti, M., Dhëmbo, E., Bejko, E., 2020).

From the transition process, social workers were facing need of several changes to be conducted by them. Since the deep effect of Covid-19 in every direction of society values were growing day-by-day. There were several systematic or personal level changes for each social worker and they were supposed to hold them not only by following new reality but at the same time it had to be reasonable in terms of ethical mandates (Farakas,K. J., Romaniuk, J. R. , 2020). As there were not many of those aspects experienced before pandemic reality by social workers, so this need for rapid changes just pushed some characteristics to stress out more (Farakas,K. J., Romaniuk, J. R. , 2020).

According to the informants, there have been several changes in their life during Covid-19. From the category of personal life, there has been information collected about the increased interest in their health and living conditions, goals and values of their life and the changes in terms of their hobbies. When it comes to the category of work-life changes has been named as transition to online work and the fear of the future. To transform this information into a table of categories and subcategories would look like in *Figure 5.*
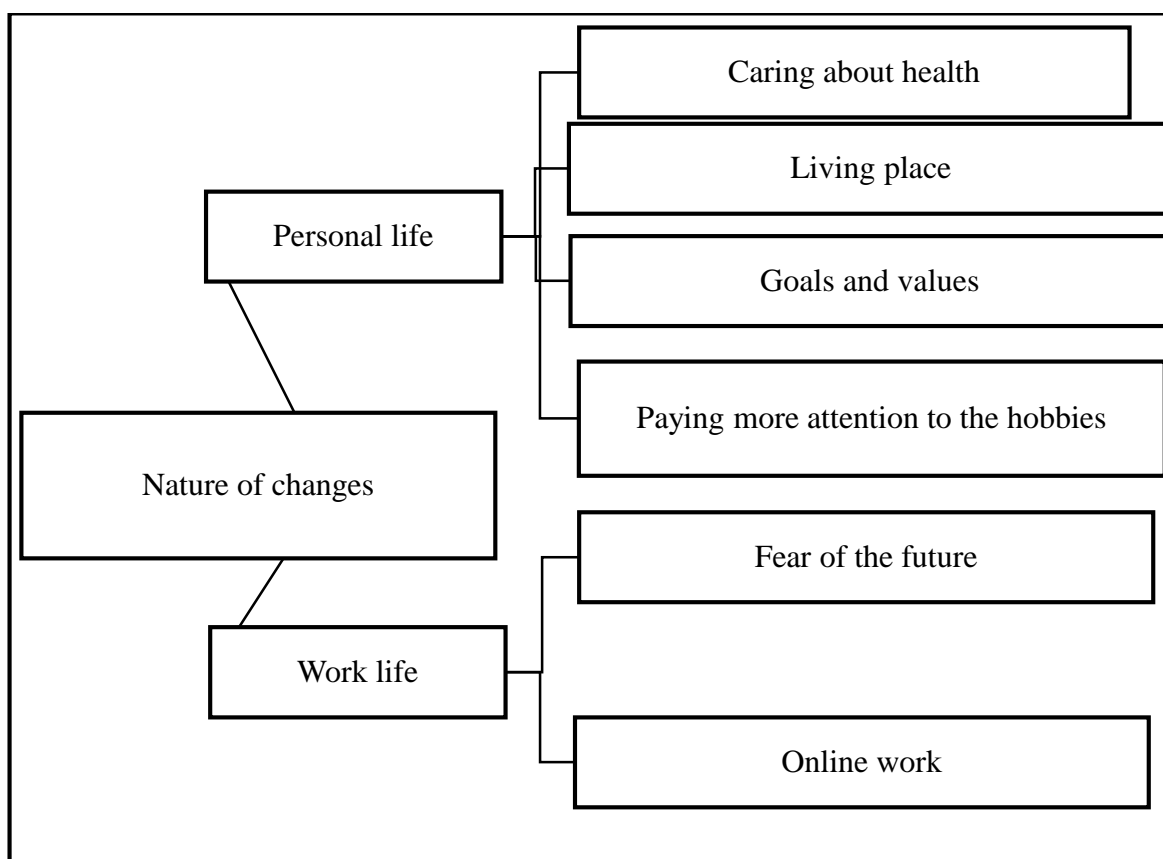

Figure 5: Changes in social worker's life, during Covid-19.

From the changes in their personal life infomants mentioned about following issues conncted to their personal life. Paying more attention to the health condition: *"<…>there is a lot a lot of changes in my life for example during Covid-19 I start care about my health more, because it is really important <…>, <..>before I was really afraid to have a contact for example one this Covid-19 started <…>, (In-1).*

Evaluating place where spending time more: *"<…> it was a lockdown and it was like I was made to stay home so it showed me that I do not like that home<…> <…> I should move out and now I moved out so it taught me that the place you are staying you should be able to stay there all day long and not only space to be there." (In-2), "<…> I just moved to in new flat, it is even more comfortable for me because I am more close to my work so now <…>,(In-1)"*

Returning to the old hobbies: *"<…>But there was a period at the beginning of Covid-19, when there was a lot of restrictions to find some time for myself I had to remember things I used to do many years ago in school, for example, painting, playing the guitar, making some meditation and it was time to come back to my things and not spend all-time for a job <…>" (In-3). "<..>I became more active I start to work more and I started to spend more time in nature, also I started to read more, Also I started to make food at home so I just became more active. <…>"(In-5).*

Changing golas and values of life: *"<..>I think there were some changes in my personal life, so I think, some friendships went and some connections <…>, <…> I made concrete kind of goals and values during this time, <…>, <…> I am not talking about the goals like very big goals but in the near future like what you want to do, in your job <…>, <…> it was a good thing that it happened for me, It sounds selfish but I think I grew up a lot during this period personally <…>, (In-4).*

Fear of the future: *"<…>I am not sure because I am waiting still if we know that it still not finished so what will be tomorrow no one knows<…> (In-1)."<…> The thing that we do not know we do not know what is going to happen and we can do our best but at some point, I have this fair that we might be closed for winter which is the worst because for us winter is the best time to attract the people <…>" (In-2).*

More online work: *"<…>I would say that we all learn to manage platforms like Zoom and teams and all understood that it is nice to use them because nowadays we also we could meet live but we choose in our organization to also have meetings in the distance because we live in different parts of Vilnius and people takes a lot of time to drive somewhere so doing online is easier<…>" (In-2).*

To summarize received data regarding social workers life during Covid-19 can be said that terms of changes in life during the pandemic have been revealed in personal and work-related aspects. The main change in terms of professional demand is considered the transition from face to face to online work. Changes connected to social workers personal life varies from the evaluation of their social and emotional condition to finding more time for their free time activities.

3.2.2. Advantages of working as a social worker during Covid-19.

The informant's responses have been stressed the advantages of working as a social worker during a pandemic. The main advantages stressed out by informants of working as a social worker during this time are the possibility of working online and remaining work by itself (see *Figure 6*)
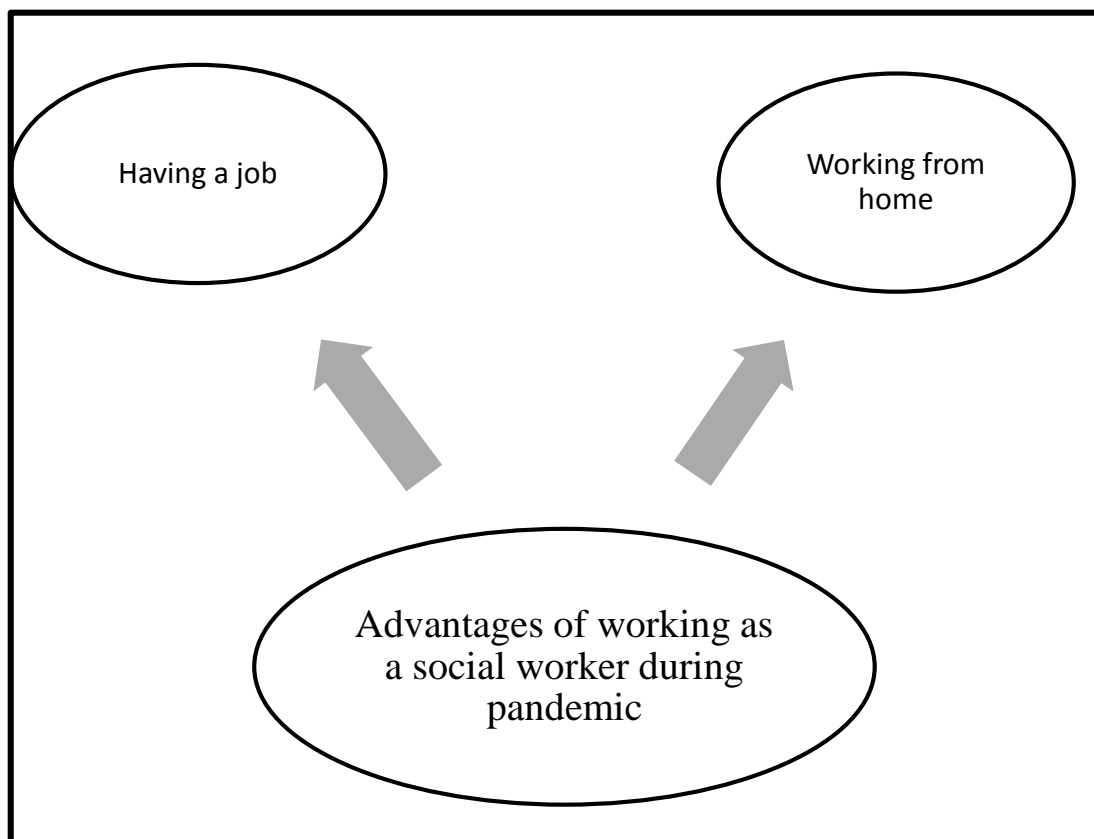

Figure 6: Advantages of working as a social worker during Covid-19.

From the time of the start Covid-19 crisis, there has been quite a lot of cases losing jobs, The reason for it has been several restrictions or lockdown. Mainly because of these aspects professionals from the different fields were forced to leave their jobs or stay in the waiting regimes (Posel, D., Oyenubi, A., Kollamparambil, U., 2021). Depending on the country and Covid-19 situation, conditions have been different for each (King, B., 2021). In this period remaining their job was already an achievement not only for social workers but also for some professionals as well. *"<...>advantages during this time can be that I basically could work most of the time because I know that a lot of my friends or my family members had some problems about working during Covid-19 and I was actually most of the time working<...>" (In-1).*

Even though technologies were playing important role in our lives, during pandemics this importance grow significant. Because the social distance is the part of this pandemic. If there was a possibility a lot of jobs went from face-to-face to online work process (Sama, G. R., Matulic, V., Pascual, A. M., Vicente, I. , 2020). From the recent literature review, there are the main reasons that are considered as advantages of working from home. It can be because of saved time on way to work, the flexibility of working hours, less chance of interactions during working time, also it can be because of less control by another person (Kloptek, M., 2017). Social work was one of those professions during Covid-19 which gave the possibility of working from home. During the research, informants mentioned some reasons why they consider working in this regime is a positive change that happened because of Covid-19. *"<...> I think mainly advantage is that as a social worker you have more time to work at home, or you have more time not to contact work and you can do paper stuff and other things<...>" (In-3). <...> I believe that very flexible work frame<...>, <...> I could do it at night and during the day I could do something else. So it was I think for me like personally biggest advantage<...>" (In-4), "<...>before Covid we did not any possibility to work from home <...>, <...> I have to work a lot with documents <...>, <...> Covid happen all companies had to somehow digitize <...>, <...> Somehow to do it and now it is easier to manage documents online so before Covid, it was difficult doing and after Covid and now I do not need to go any social service companies I can just send an email, sign with a mobile signature so it worked many ways easier.<...>" (In-5).*

In summary, Collected data shows that social workers taking part in this research considered as advantageous to remain actually job during a pandemic. Since there were occasions when some professionals stay without jobs because of the difficulties encountered during pandemics. As well

to have the possibility to work from home. This change was the result of the great need for social distancing.

3.2.3 Disadvantages of working as a social worker during Covid-19

To analyse the reasons that can be considered as a disadvantage of working as a social worker during a pandemic is a considerable aspect, especially after talking about advantages in this regard. From the informants, answers can be drawn to the general picture of disadvantages. They mentioned the issues connected to the technical conditions that also is connected to the second and very important aspect of having no right type of communication with the client. The last issue named has been the reduced amount of motivation at work. (see *Figure 7*)
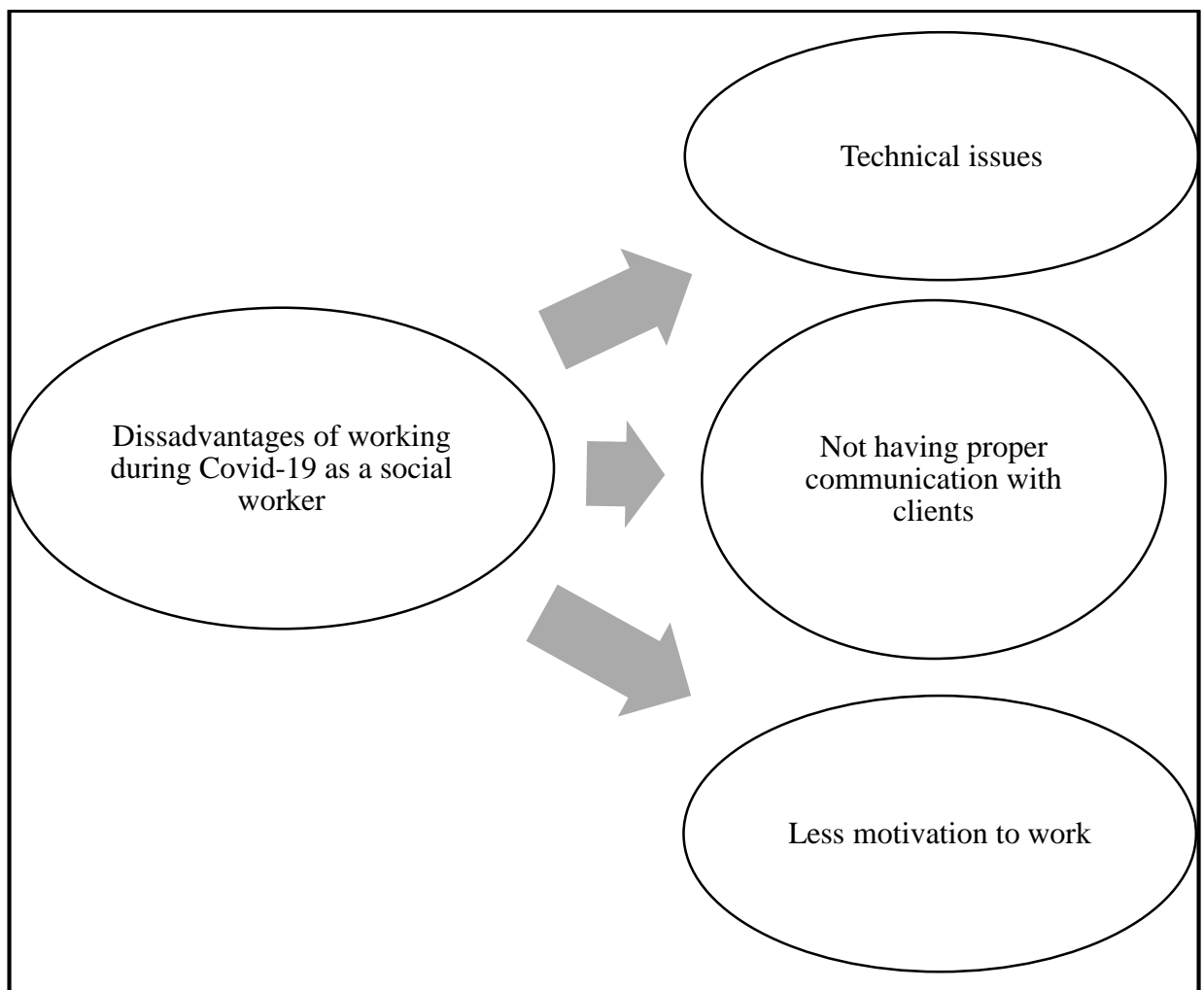
Figure 7: Disadvantages of working as a social worker during Covid-19.

The transition from face-to-face to online work according to its meaning considers that one should already have enough information and also technical support in order to conduct proper support (Cabiati, E., 2021).

Informants have identified issues connected to technical characteristics: *"<…> it was very hard from the beginning to adapt, to know this technique really good<…>, <…> for example zoom or some other platforms we were using it was really hard from the beginning <…> "* (In-1). *"<…>they were not able to join Zoom maybe they did not have a computer or they did not want to spend more time on screen because all the lessons were online<…>"* (In-2). *"<…>they do not have so many possibilities to do something online, for example, they do not have a computer or they do not have skills.<…>, <…> They do not know how to use a computer so then it came that you cannot do many things because online.<…>"* (In-3). Another aspect regarding the disadvantages of working as a social worker is not connected only about working in this field but in general, one of the aspects of working from home and not going to actually work is the decreased amount of motivation because not being pushed by supervisor (Kloptek, M., 2017). Among this research one of the informants also mentioned this aspect. *"<…>sometimes it is very difficult to push yourself and do something when you do not have that, when you do not have to work eight hours every day<…>, <…> productivity is not as high as it could be at the workplace."* (In-4).

Social work is very much dependent on personal connection with clients. Even though there are some parts of this profession that requires working on documents, still having conversations or in general real contact is the very important part. As an answer to rapid changes happening because of Covid-19, moving to online work was the only way of still having the hope of continuing providing appropriate service for vulnerable groups. The main aim of social workers while online work was to think of innovative, new ways of adapting to this situation of pandemics (Farakas,K. J., Romaniuk, J. R. , 2020). *"<…>that it's even harder now because we have to organize some events some, and so on and I really don't know their cause sometimes took is really, really hard to plan or so follow this a plan because you don't really see people you have to think like how to say what today will say about it in their mind, so because you don't see their expression<…>"* (In-1). *"<…>youngsters wanted this space to escape from their parents or that atmosphere at home they want to spend time somewhere else.<…>, <…> So when it was a lockdown and you take away that ability to escape their home.<…>"* (In-2). *"<…> there are things that not working and if you are not in contact with the person <…>, <…> anyways you have to make this real contact maybe much*

less before but it is needed. So it is really difficult when you have to anyway meet and do things during the Covid-19<...>" (In-3). "<...> in social work the most important tool as you know to work with the client in contact and have a relationship so it was kind of difficult to make conversations and agreements to the client's online platforms<...>, <...> for my clients also from me as a social worker to meet my clients face to face <...>, <...> I missed face to face contact <...>" (In-5).

In conclusion, there has been named three main aspects in terms of disadvantages while working as a social worker during Covid-19 times. One of those aspects can be said that have specific characteristics that are closely related to the nature of social work. Another two reveals a more general condition in terms of working through online platforms. Since not only for social workers but for everyone working online during the covid-19 time these issues of having technical problems were relevant.
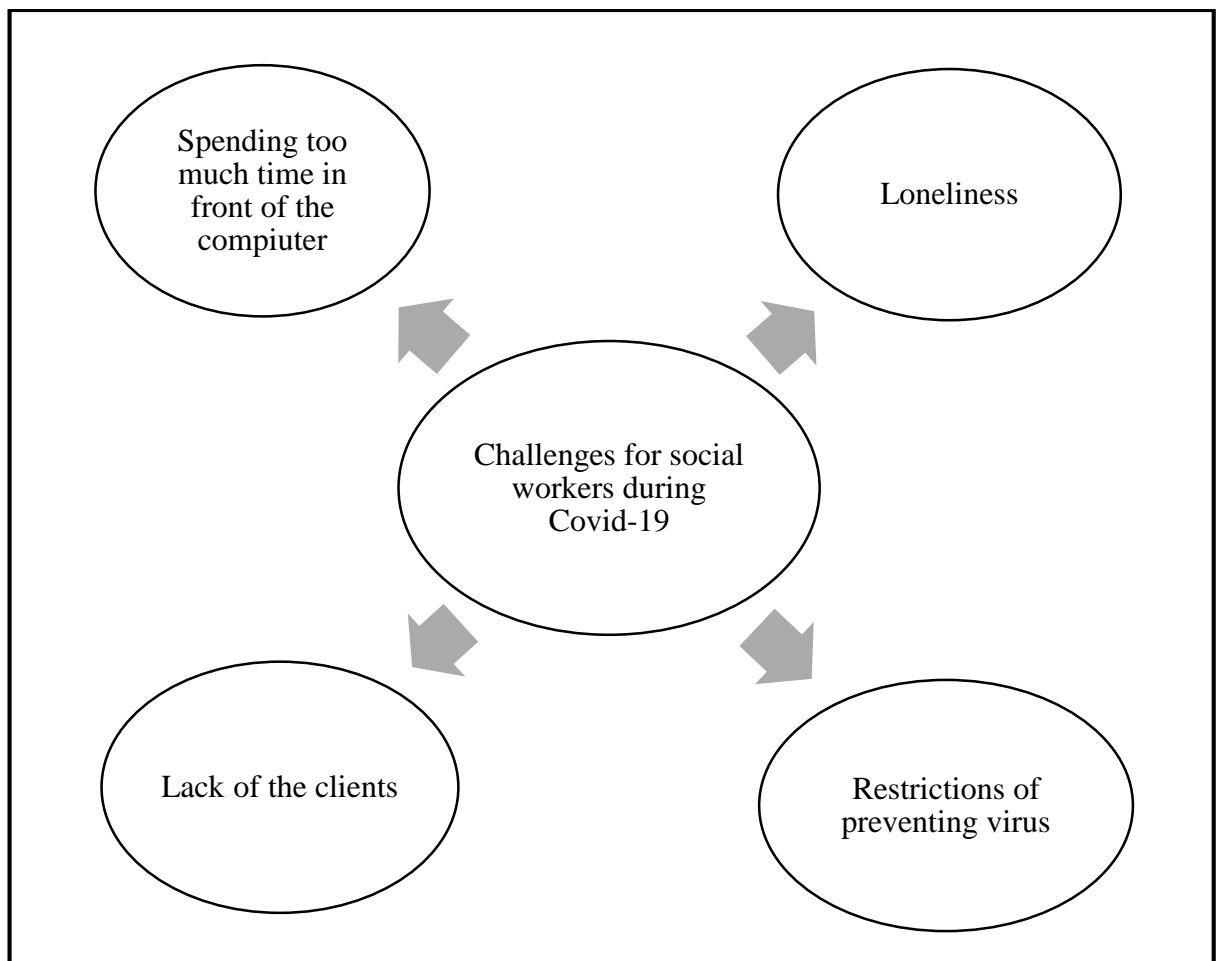
3.2.4. Challenges that social workers face during pandemics

Challenge during Covid-19 for social workers was at first to deliver needed service for the community . Since the long-lasted chain of regulations made it even harder to adapt to all these changes and accept them with all characteristics. On one hand, this process pushed social workers on a different level to get more innovative and effective ways in order to replace face-to-face work. Another side of this process is that in most cases social workers were not ready for these changes and even if they were, it took quite a lot of time to figure out more about technical skills. Since there was not much guiding information from previous experience (Henley, L. J., Henley,Z. A., Hay, K., Chhay, Y., Pheun, S., 2021). The importance of social workers was clear before as well but in terms of Covid-19 or any other type of crisis, the amount of the responsibilities gain more power for these professionals. As a result, social workers were feeling pressure to deal with new challenges that were or still are in front of them and their clients (Roy, S., Kaur, N. , 2020).

Analyzing recent studies about this topic can be said that working online and using different platforms while communicating with clients create a double standard in terms of reviewing it. From the point of considering these delineated of a challenge, there are already several outlooks that are under the great attention of social workers interest. Using technologies on daily basis for social workers raises a lot of questions linked with the code of ethics and whether are they following it or

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not. many social workers agreed because of their practical cases, that privacy policy is not quite ensured while having consultations with clients. The most cases they can not make sure that the information changing process between social worker and client is happening confedecially. If before this process was under the control of social workers in terms of online work they had lost this mechanism that remains one of the main challenges for social workers. This is also closely related to the challenge of receiving real information from the clients since sometimes confidentiality is not ensured there are no clear guarantees that received information is reliabe (Pascoe, K. M. , 2021).

Information collected from the informant is generated in *Figure 8.* Where the main challenges of working during a pandemic for social workers has been collected. Challenge of spending a lot of time in front of the devices like computers, phones. Some organizations were lacking a number of clients. There has been mentioned the challenges connected to the current restrictions for preventing viruses. The last component in this regard has been mentioned loneliness.

Figure 8: Challenges that social workers face during pandemics.

Informants stressed out some of the specific challenges that they were facing during Covid-19, First of them is the difficulty to work online for a long time, since it requires sitting in front of the screen: "*<…>sometimes I am not really able to sit in front of the computer and do so many things <…>, <…> they need assisting from online and they do not come to us then it is getting really hard because then we have to do it online and we have to be in this Zoom <…>, <…> they most of the time want this our help online, which is really hard and it is also challenging to plan some activities for them because it is again like you need to know better and you need to have better communication <…>*" (In-1).

Another point that has been mentioned by informants is connected to the reduced amount of clients: "*<…> we are already open why is this young person not coming or why their families not coming what is happening so I think that it is a challenge that we do not have beneficiary<…>*" (In-1). "*<…>now we are facing this problem that not a lot of youngsters come in our centre because they do not know are we working or not, so they are not motivated to look for information so we do lose this trust relationship <…>, <…> we lost a lot of youngsters during a pandemic <…>*" (In-2).

Next is difficulties connected to adapting Covid-19 restrictions: "*<…>Another struggle would be wearing masks like we understand what is happening to them but sometimes with youngsters there are problems like come on you are not drinking put on your mask, put on your mask and reminding them and it is also so annoying <…>, <…> if they are eating or drinking they have to take it off, well they do not have to be vaccinated they can enter without vaccination so that is also sometimes dangerous and it makes a lot of chaos.<…> "* (In-2). *<…> In the beginning, there were challenges but I think main challenges were restrictions and that you cannot go somewhere and of course like a virus that we had to deal with <…>*" (In-3).

The last aspect in terms of challeneges for social workers revealed is the feeling of loneliness: "*<…>like for everyone it was the feeling of left out and the feeling of loneliness like because you are not allowed to see you parents, your family, friend <…>, <…> feeling like you do not know how you are just anxious like fair of living and you are trying to be calm and at the same time you are feeling yeah <…>*" (In-4). "*<…>I think it was 2019 it was kind of challenging not to meet family and friends face to face also it was kind of sad to celebrate Easter online with the family also, I do not know, challenges can be loneliness <…>*" (In-5).

To summarize this topic, the main challenges during a pandemic for social workers were restrictions heald because of Covid-19, feeling of loneliness, difficulties connected to sitting in front of the computer long hour and shortage of clients that approach social workers during this time.

3.2.5. Initiatives taking place at work during a pandemic

This subchapter will be analyzed initiatives that have been conducted at the workplace of social workers during pandemics. From the time when our society realized that Covid-19was becoming pandemic and the only thing each person and professional had left was to deal with it and accept the new reality in the world. Social workers were one of the first who saw the great need for their help in society. It was visible in every country that pandemics made groups more vulnerable and there was some work to be done by social workers dictated by people in need of social and emotional support. Because of the nature of the pandemic, the number of people was increasing day-to-day (Faura, J. G. , 2020). Some social workers were the authors of initiatives taking place during this time and some of them were participating actively in those initiatives, together with the other community members. Social workers at this time start adopting new technologies and using the different portals to reach their clients because they can not meet face-to-face. They also created hotlines for people who needed specialized services. Some of the social workers went to conduct social support by collecting materials needed for vulnerable groups. It can be said that social workers in this regard realized that there was no time for deep analysis, thinking and taking actions according to it. Rapid changes during pandemic were not given much time for it they were facing the essential need of changes (Truell, R., 2020).

Putting so many responsibilities on social workers during pandemics, time of chaotic changes was pushing them more to maintain core values of their profession and at the same time adapt to initiatives at their workplace. In terms of changes and adapting periods for social workers during Covid-19 became great teachers of setting flexible mechanisms in case of crisis like this pandemic (Kong, S.T., Noone, C., 2020).

Figure 9 is represented generalized data from informants about initiatives that have been conducted at their workplace during Covid-19. As a result of the coronavirus crisis, social distancing became crucial so conducting online work was the type of initiative for social workers. Also has been mentioned interactive methods and the rotation at the workplace as initiatives during pandemics.
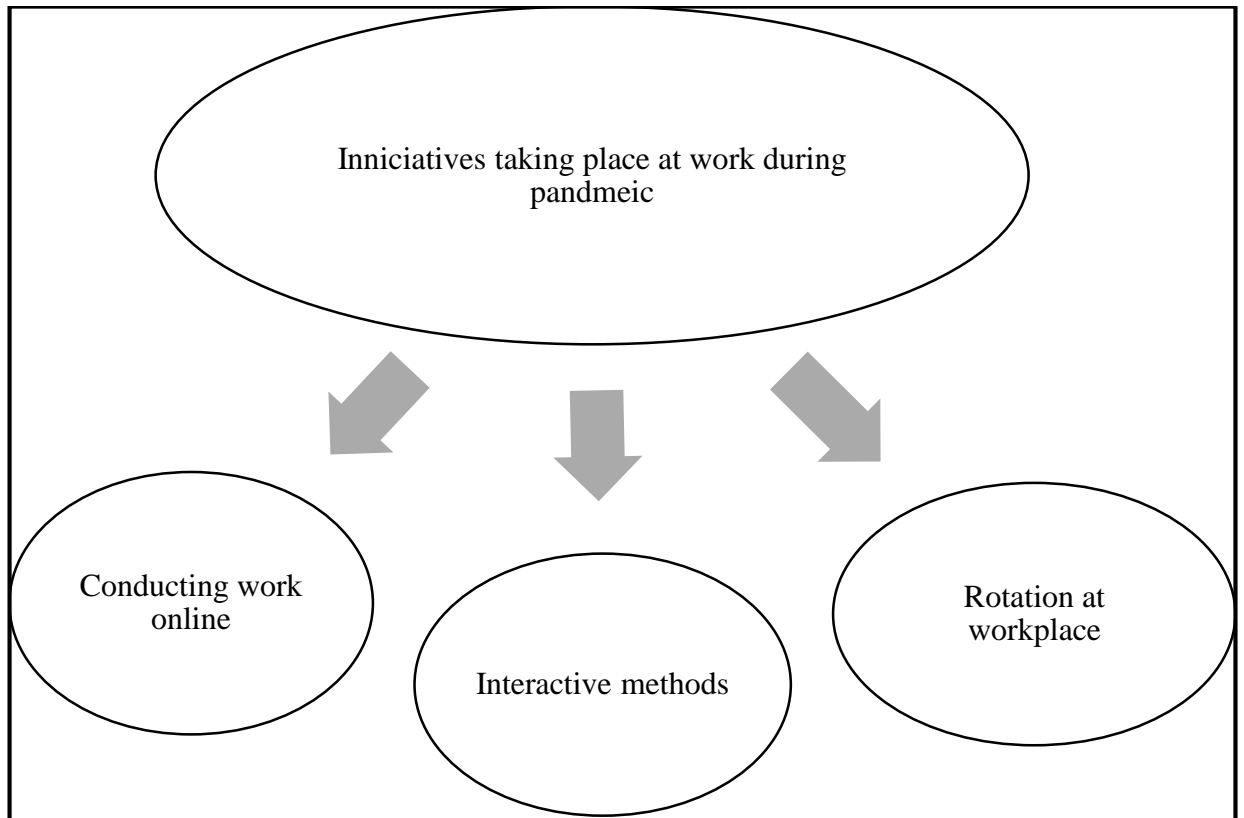
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Figure 9: Inniciattives taking place at work for social workers during pandemic.

The first aspect of this topic is to start conducting work online: "*<…>for example at my work that we need to do something new from zoom or from these teams platform we need to somehow connect these people and try to give information<…>, <…> it should be something like fun way or like games or so on so this is initiatives<…>, <…> In the beginning, no one really knew what we were doing how we were supposed to do things, but after it became more clear <…>" (In-1). "<…>we try to make these indicative to put information on social media and we trying to its say on Monday we post about food, Tuesday we post about psychological tips, like how to stay healthy and something else so this initiative required a lot of time to prepare a design for social media <…>, <…> to play table games online some video games together thought Zoom <…>, <…> Like only two people would join there was no Zoom party or something it was more like an individual. <…>" (In-2). "<…>- Most initiatives during a pandemic it was to digitize <…>, <…> we can use these technologies to socialize so we did not stop work, we continue work but just it was online platforms. <…>" (In-5).*

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Think of new interactive methods that would be applicable to the new reality: *" <...> as a social worker it was my duty to during the Covid to do some kind of initiative to that parents come together <...>, <...>I was also calling to the teachers to parents every two days of just like informing like how are you feeling just like small talks but they would know that there is a person that they could share their feelings <...>, <...> small social let's say initiatives to just remind that everything is going to be ok. Like you are not alone and for parents like I think we did like some kind of hand picture like that they could create with their child and put on the window and some of them wrote on the hand like it will pass <...> "* (In-4).

One informant mentioned inniciative connected to regulation that workplace carried out: *"<...>like to make sure that not many people sitting in one room and then we were splitting or maybe we had a rotation like when you are going to the office every day in the office they were like three-four people no more so it was like maybe you go to the office once or twice in a week just for a meeting other things are online<...>"* (In-3).

In summary main characteristics connected to initiatives during a pandemic for social workers were to adapt the new reality of working online, create new methods and activities applicable for online work with clients.

3.2.6. Changes in terms of productivity during Covid-19

To start describing the concept of productivity at the workplace for social workers, in this case during a pandemic it is quite significant. Usually, a sense of productivity if we ask each person is identified differently. In his article (Ravalier, J. M. , 2020) says that for professional social workers there are several aspects that can be beneficial in order to increase their well-being. One of those points is the understanding and respect for their profession and their work from other people. Until today there is not enough knowledge about this profession and professionals by itself. People tend to feel motivated to do their job for different reasons but getting respect from society can strengthen this condition noticeably. Another very important point in this regard is giving freedom for social workers to perform their work. They can choose the method and time of working according to their abilities and feeling of productivity. This aspect particularly can raise several questions whether it is or not individual since not everyone can put much effort at work unless they are not feeling "pushed" or "forced" to do so. But in this case, social workers are considered one of those

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professionals for whom this kind of approach will have more possibility to get productive (Ravalier, J. M. , 2020).

Productivity is closely related to job satisfaction. People who are motivated and inspired at their workplace on daily basis is always in better condition in terms of productivity than those who are experiencing low motivation or have no job satisfaction (Cornelissen, T., 2016).

The main factors affecting productivity level for a person can be divided into personal, professional and organizational demands. Accordingly, the great performance of these three components in complexity will define the result of a person productivity level (Calitz, T., Roux, A., Strydom, H., 2014). In order to find the correlation between social workers productivity level and Covid-19 should consider all these challenges or just changes after the time when they started working in Coronavius reality.

From the informants has been received information representing whether their feeling of productivity has been increased or decreased in terms of Covid-19.

Figure 10 is presented generalized data from research informants about their productivity during the Covid-19 times. In this regard, two main subchapters have been stressed out. The first represents a reduced amount of productivity during a pandemic and the second opposite to it. Shows more productivity during this time.
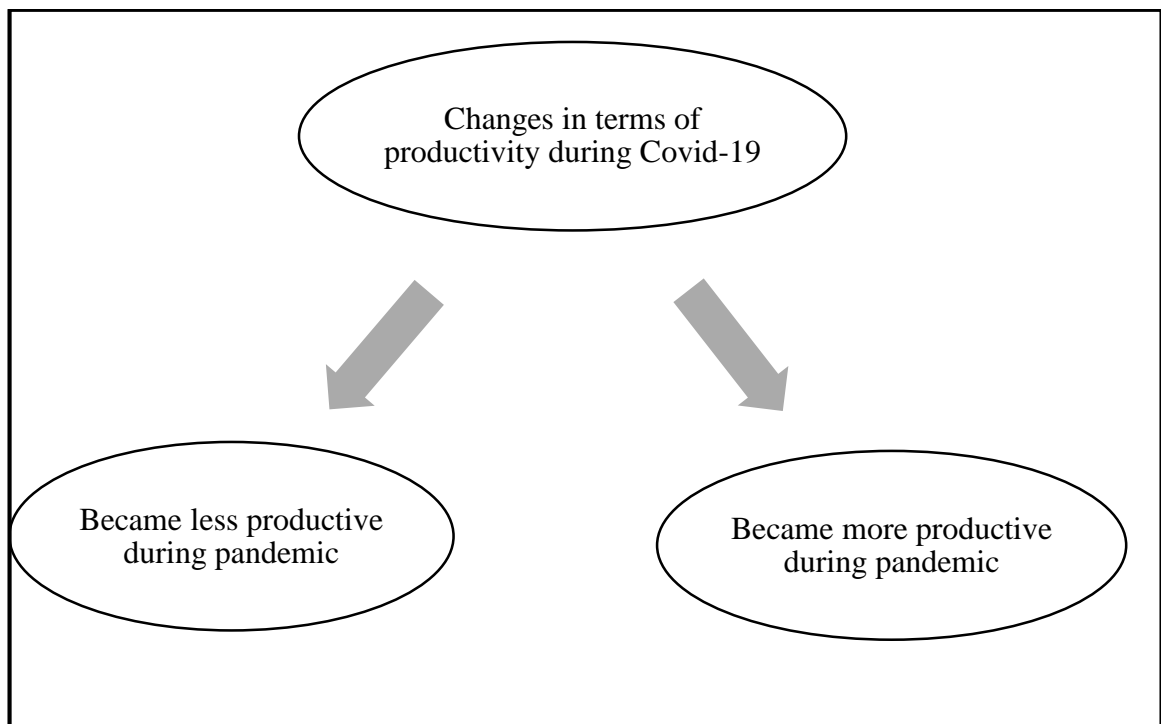

Figure 10: Changes in terms of productivity during pandemic among social workers.

There has been stressed two subgroups while analyzing data from informants. First ones represented by social workers who became more productive during pandemics: "*<…>Productivity for me is less than for example before Covid<…>,<…> Before Covid it was better I was really doing some times I was thinking some kind of activates some kind of games for them and was more motivated and now I just want to like do what I am supposed to do<…>, <…> I am not feeling so, how to say, like I am not feeling that I am doing something great <…>,<…> for these time it is sometimes really boring so I know that I am doing something just to time to pass and that is it.<…>, <…> I do but I still like my job, but it is a bit different I do not know how to say it may be less motivation <…>*" (In-1). "*<…>I would say that there was before less online work, there was in contact talking with youngsters, talking about their problems and everything and now sometimes it is still like you have to chat on Facebook which requires also some time and it is more tiring to chat then to speak normally so I would evaluate that it got pretty intense like because of all of the online thing.<…>*" (In-2).

Productivity during Covid-19 increased: "*<…>it was very exciting from the beginning even though it was hard times I was feeling very productive and I think I am still like that<…>*" (in-3). "*<…> - I think it changed because I made goals, so I think it grew up and I think that now I see strategically how I can put all the things through the day.<…>, <…> during the Covid I find out that I am more productive in the evening so that is why I am not pushing myself to come to work very early and be very productive I would come to work at ten but I would work until ten for example. It works better for me.<…>*" (In-4). "*<…>I think now I became more productive because we are working online because before we used to go to the office we spend a lot of time talking and hanging around with colleagues <…> <…> So now I still work three or two times from home so these days are the most productive for me because I can totally concentrate on work and that is why I became more productive <…>*" (In-5).

To summarize social workers for some social workers Covid-19 time have the possibility to be more productive by appreciating the flexibility of online work. In the other hand some of them, it became a reason for being less productive.

3.2.7. Social workers hobbies during a pandemic

Having some activities to do except work in your free time can define a lot of aspects of a person's life. It is widely known that hobbies have a lot of advantages in terms of formating our personality. In the modern world, more and more types of hobbies start existing and it is more possible for people to choose the one they feel more comfortable with. Having hobbies help us to do something that we enjoy, relax or just receive pleasure. The importance of having free time activity gets more and more important in the modern world. Some hobbies have an impact on our health condition. For example, the ones that improve our ability of movement like dance, exercises, walking in nature, hiking or etc. (University of Arkansas).

One of the main purposes for everyone doing different types of activities during their free time is to take care and fulfil their human needs. Connected to this feature the right of leisure time is officially set for every person no matter their profession or other preferences. Getting less leisure time by their wish or because of other conditions at work affects productivity level not only in terms of emotional condition but also it is applied on every demand of persons physical endurance (Owens, E. G., 2016).

In terms of social work, hobbies play a very interesting part since sometimes social workers need additional skills to conduct the right type of service and in this time having some background and also getting creative ideas can be very helpful (Johnson, E. J., Wahab, H. A., 2010). Not only on this occasion but also in general for escaping from work routine having hobbies are beneficial. When we are talking about Covid-19 reality depending on country and period it has been big attention on free time activities because of restrictions and social distancing rules, that made people having their daily routine and interests completely changed. Social workers, in this case, are included between those people who had refreshed their point of view about life (Yelamanova, A., Yelesh, A., 2020). Having activities or hobbies helps people in some cases to find the right balance between work and personal life. While talking about these issues we do not have to forget that not only for social workers personally but for work that they doing is also important that they have a balance between these two aspects. It is quite a simple concept to realize. if a social worker is not taking care of himself/herself then she/he can not fully be effective at the workplace. Since it got obvious that social work quality of conducted each step affects to actual people, clients so this chain of reason and consequences becoming pretty clear (Hanna, A., n.d.). Spending enough time for own

self-care and finding appropriate free time activity for a social worker in short terms might look like a person not dedicated to her/his work enough and just motivated to do other things but in long run, it will have a huge effect on work this professional will take (Downs, C., 2016). *Figure 11* Shows free time activity types, hobbies for social workers during the Coronavirus pandemic. From the research informants answers, there has been drawn the main type of activities are reading, spending time in nature, doing physical activities or continuing working in free time as well.
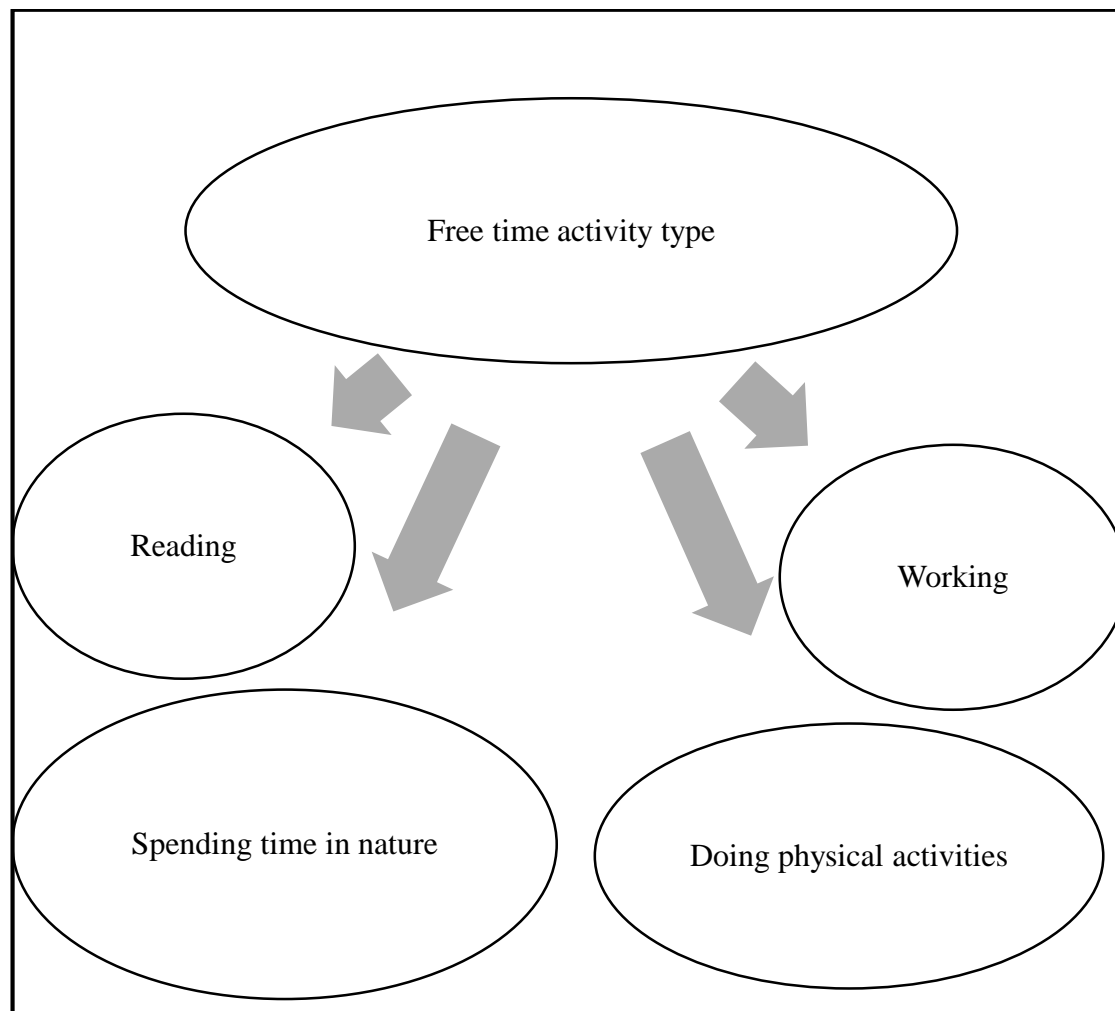

Figure 11: Free time activities of social workers During Covid-19.

Spending free time in nature: *"<...>- My free time I like going to the nature, I really much like walking, to be in the forest and there is the forest near our work I also go there during my break, and in the winter and in any weather I just go to walk think to reflect myself <...>, <...> I really like to walk there <....>" (In-1). "<...>I always love to see nature but I never, how to say, I never felt how much strength I need this and I always had like a lot of time in nature but during the Covid-*

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19 when you have to sit almost every time at home I realize how is this important for me and then I walk every evening and then I felt it how much I need it <...>"(In-3). "<...>I also love hiking and I love forests <...>" (In-4).

Doing physical activities: *"<...>I am trying to do not always managing still it is going to some exercise to the gym and go swimming or maybe spend some<...>" (In-3). "<...>I started to work out more<...>, <...>like four months ago I started to go to the gym<...>" (In-5).*

Reading: *"<...>So at this time it is very hard to say what are my hobbies I have several books that I read from time to time<...>" (In-2). "<...>so usually in my leisure time, I am just spending time on reading articles, books, seminars, everything, like about a different kind of topics. It is also for my just basic knowledge but it is everything about my work that interests me in general in work. So it is kind of my leisure time now<...> (In-4).*

Having no free time: *"<...>right now actually I am facing a huge problem because I have no free time<...>, <...> actually I really have this problem only recently I understand that something is wrong, I do not have free time <...>" (In-2). "<...>I consider myself a very workaholic person <...>, <...> It is also for my just basic knowledge but it is everything about my work that interests me in general in work. So it is kind of my leisure time <...> (In-4).*

Summing up the type of activities during their free time in terms of the pandemic period for social workers vary. These types are walking in nature doing physical activities like exercises or going to the gym, reading literature or work-related files and at the end also would pay attention to having no time for hobbies.

3.2.8. Social workers feelings after work during Covid-19 times

Social workers are responsible for their client's emotional well being most cases they emphasise positive aspects of it and for negative dimensions they are trying to find ways of coping with it. This applies to the time when they are interacting with their clients during worktime (Fernández, M. D. R., Amo, R. O., Díaz, E. A., Medina, I. M. F., Padilla, J.H., 2021). When it comes to the emotions and especially emotions after work it is meant to point the importance of social workers feelings in this regard. There are occasions when people are trying their best not to express their feelings so they keep inside until a specific time and later they show. It might be happening that after work when they stay more away from job responsibilities and feel more alone, they are

feeling comfortable to express it. Social workers emotional resilience plays a huge role in terms of their work and personal life. Consequences for each emotional aspect of their condition at first affects their feelings, after this, it is expressed at the workplace while processing social work in practice. If there are positive feelings after work time collected in-person memory it points out positive outcome not only in past but for future days as well. Accordingly negative collects similar backgrounds for their emotional stage. Both of these feelings generalized in a positive and negative view can become the reason for different types of issues in life that connects in some aspect of stress or burnout (Collins, S., 2008).

During collecting information from social workers attention has been paid to their emotional condition after work during Covid-19. Social workers often feel overwhelmed, stressed and tired after work in Covid-19 reality. Processed information can be seen at *Figure 12.*
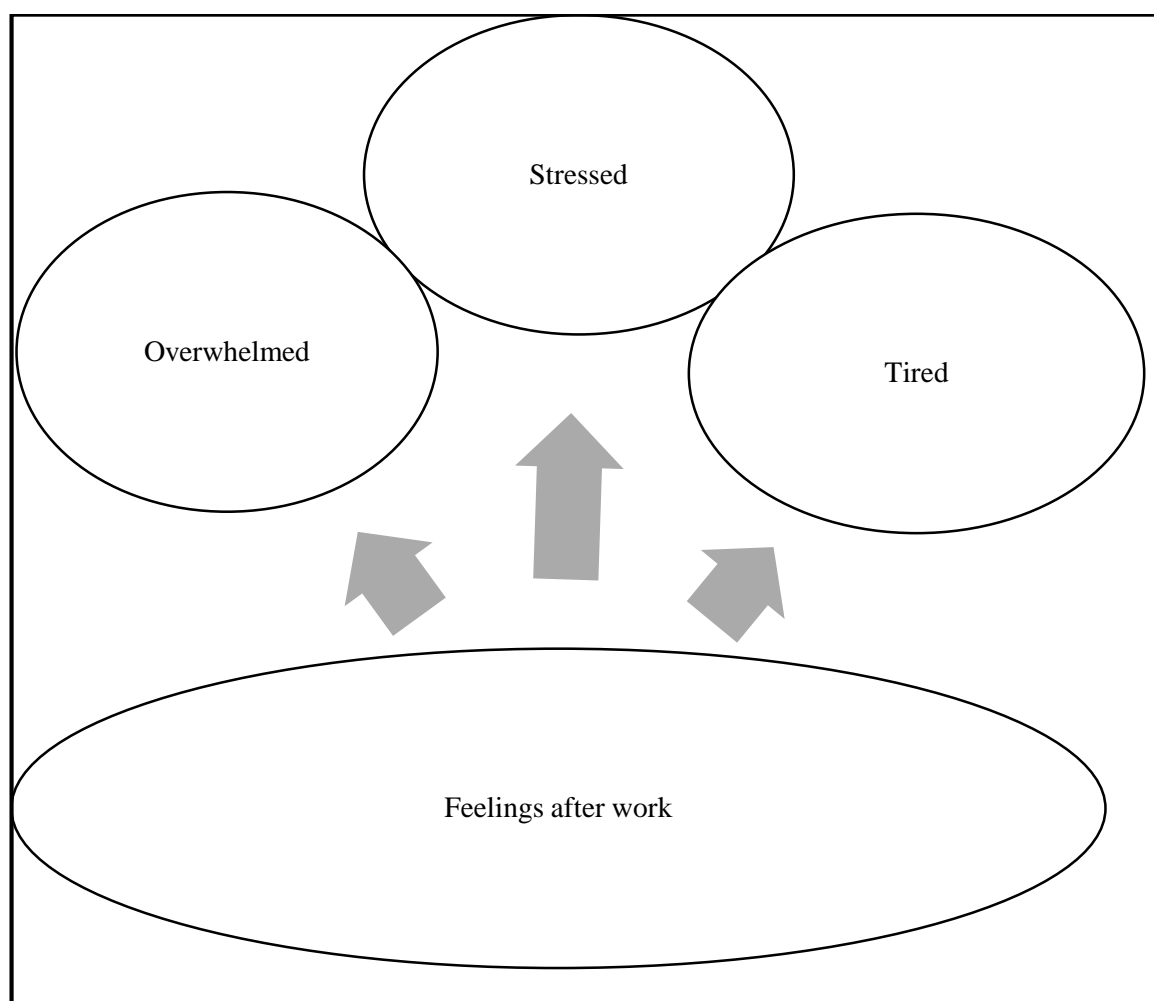

Figure 12: Social workers feelings after work during Covid-19.

From the responses of informants stress has been named as commond feeling after work day:"<...> - *After work, I usually try to relax because I feel stressed, I go home, I prepare food, I have my dog I am spending time with him and I am trying not to actually think about work what is not always possible <...>,<...> I am always online, there were sometimes I am doing on Saturday and Sunday. After work, I try not to think about work but not always possible<...>"* (In-1). *"<...>sometimes you feel some stressed you know, some days are kind of intense<...>"* (In-3).

Another feeling they named is being tired: *"<...>Most of the days, because we end the work it is already dark outside and feels exhausted and I feel very tired and mainly like I go home still but some emotions of the work and I trying to calm myself down and this emotional weight it built over time because from now on I am working every day<...>, <...> I figure it out when I come home and I am still thinking about a work situation, but then it is very late in the evening so you kind of preparing to sleep so it is all mixed up right now. So it is hard not to think about work <...>"(In-2). "<...>if the day is hard I am facing some challenges then I feel tired and when I feel tired I just go for walk or talk to my friend so I do not know <...>"* (In-5).

Being overwhelmed also being answered: *"<...>it was a very overwhelming period <...>,<...>so it is a lot, it is a lot because a person it is also I think it is for managers like a person who needs to be for others as a different kind of specialist like physiologist, manager, a friend like there is a lot of things that you need to be for another person so it is very difficult <...>,<...> I was feeling like a sponge, and every time I was coming at home and when you think omg. Now also I feel the same but now I do not have to say it to anyone <...>"* (In-4)

To summarize the main feelings of research informants during Covid-19 time at their workplace are being stressed because of the hard day at work. Being tired also has been named as the result of their workday. In the end, they also mentioned being overwhelmed.

3.2.9. Social workers relationship with colleagues

Working at one place with different backgrounds people, might cause problems and as well can be quite helpful at the same time. The meaning behind it varies depending on what kind of professionals are we talking about. In this case, social worker social workers are the main interest object of this study paper so the attention will be on these professionals. Conducting their work social workers might be doing it surrounded by the same field professionals and also possible with others as well. For example with teachers, lawyers, doctors and etc. might be working temporarily
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and permanently. Relationships between colleagues are formating not only according to their personality but also because of the specification of each profession they are surrounded by (Robison, W. L., Reeser, L.).

For social workers, it is always very important to have a correct ethical relationship with clients. This is all about relationships with clients but what happens when it comes to colleagues by themselves? The nature of the team spirit or relationship aspects in an organization affects situations at work or the mood of each worker. Some researchers set assumptions connected to this topic. More detailed it can be considered that in terms of relationships social workers who are working together with other professionals have a lot of issues while doing their work. The reason for it is the difference of course. Can be because of different personal interests and also because of different professional values. When it comes to working with a group of social workers it is becoming a bit easier for the professionals to agree on ways of dealing with cases or any problematic issue that they are facing (Kennedy, J., 2019).

During Covid-19 reality instead of going to the actual workplace more relevant become online work, also daily social interaction becomes rarer and rarer since people realized that there was no need to have at least a small conversation with your colleague during work. If before this kind of interaction were happening because of stumbling across to someone in online reality this possibility is gone in lower level. As well as with other people, colleagues also, some organizations started having team meetings or less official, team buildings bu using a different kind of online platforms. There are several pros and cons of this kind of approach that people already reflected through the duration of the pandemic (Baym, N., Larson, J., Martin, R., 2021). *Figure 11* shows what kind of relationships do informants have with their colleagues during pandemics. From the mentioned types of relationships, there is generalized information represented by supportive colleagues who are receiving advice from them. Some social workers mentioned that they have meetings with their coworkers after working hours. The last one in this regard is having clear boundaries with colleagues.
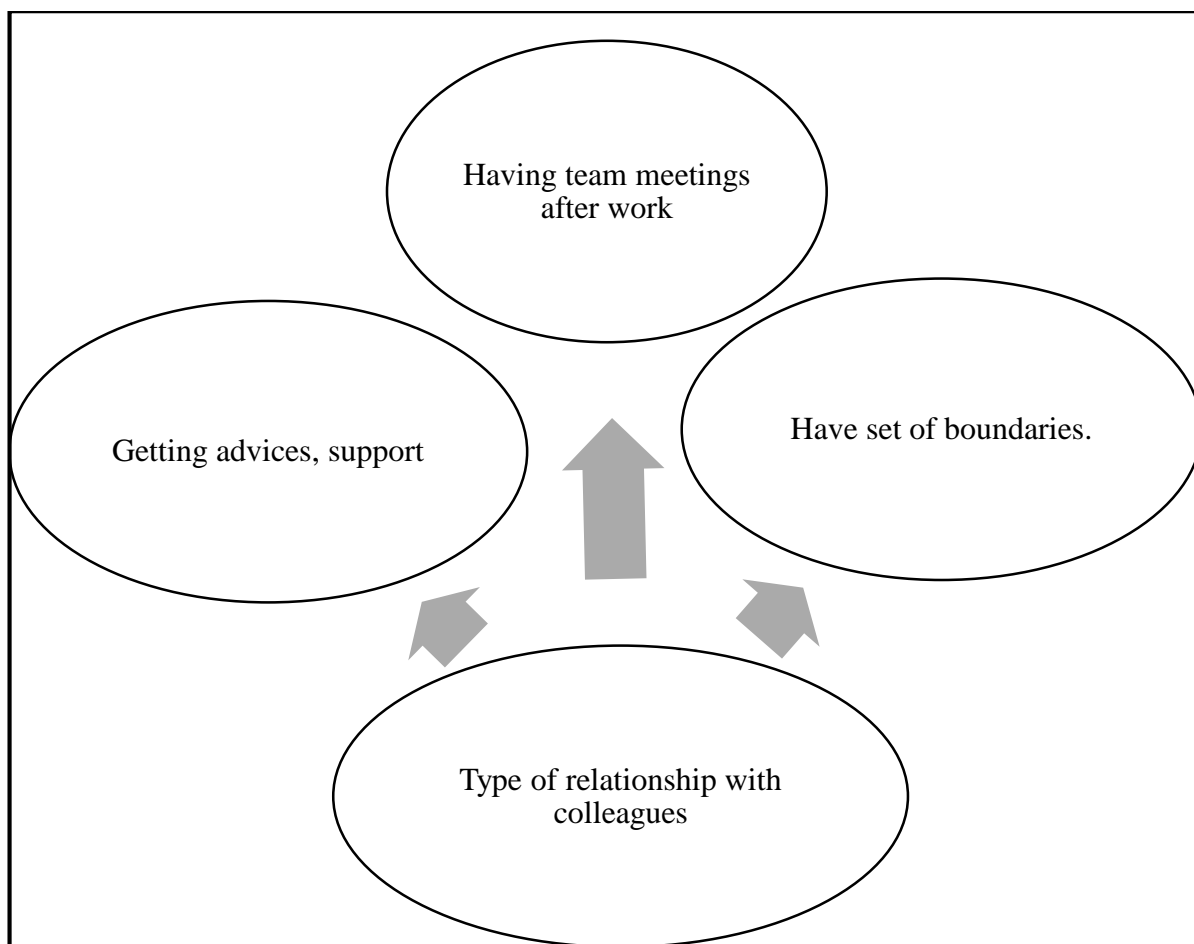
Figure 11: Nature of relationship of social workers with their colleagues.

Receiving advices and support from colleagues: *"<...>It is good, it is good, I have a good relationship with my colleagues, with all of them because we are working together already <...>, <...> we sometimes even help each other, because there are some cases when we need someone's advice, and for example some my colleagues are better in psychology or they are better in speech therapy or they have better knowledge in training so they do better than me some games and activities so I always go and ask them, I do not say that I know everything. And they help me a lot <...>" (In-1). "<...>So we have a good relationship I feel a very strong team that, some can listen to you and support you. It is nice to go every day<...>" (In-3).*

Having team meetings after work: *"<...>So I am really happy that we in our team do not have some dramas or some tension, we are kind of friends we do not spend time like after work together but we have this very trustworthy relationship that we can trust each other <...>,<...> me and my colleague that worked that day we sit down and we talk about it what happened so it already takes some of the weights from my shoulder but still some of it lives in me and I figure it out when I*

come home and I am still thinking about a work situation <...>,<...> we do not have to worry or district or tell something we can openly say what is from our view the best for youngsters, so in this sense, I am very lucky to have let's say have so close relationship to the people that I am working with and so it is not intense so it is very relaxing contact <...>"(In-2). "<...>maybe when there was this stronger quarantine we did not have these team buildings but now this year like everything is fine sometimes we do not know we go out together<...>, <...> So good relationship everything is fine <...> (In-5).

Having set boundaries: *"<...>I do not expect that and I know my duty, not the duty, of who I am in this organization ad I am not letting personal things come at work, so if I know that I am the person who asks a question to others, help others, so then for me, I am not going to my colleagues and saying oo I am feeling not good <...>"(In-4).*

To summarize received data, social workers have different types of relationships with colleagues it might be with a set of boundaries, a closer relationship that includes meetings with coworkers after work time as well. And also the interesting factor of having reflections together with colleagues was mentioned.

3.2.9. Suggestions to prevent professional burnout among social workers

When it comes to the ways of coping with burnout among professional social workers there has been a lot of scientific literature background in front of us but like during their work cases in this time also there are several factors that can define the nature of chosen way of preventing burnout syndrome. Yet there is the possibility of more generalization of information revised from those researches and studies that have been done in order to examine the strategies that might be helpful for social workers. In this subchapter, attention will be paid to two aspects mainly the first is how can social workers help themself to prevent professional burnout and the second one is how the administrative sector can help them in this regard.

Ways of preventing burnout is an interesting object already a long time and yet even now there is no set of approaches that still will be applicable for everyone. While it is known that usually there are two types of strategies in social work practice considered helpful to prevent this process. The first one is person-centred and another work (organization) centred approach (Pijpker, R., Vaandrager, L., Veen E. J., Koelen, M. A., 2019). Even though it is known that conducting each of

them separately tends to take not more than 6 months. Because of the complexity of the reasons the most cases implementing a combined approach is getting us the better result even if from the beginning it is clear that it will take much longer in time perspective ("Learn to prevent and deal with burnout effect", 2012-2014). To analyze separately person-directed approach aims at changing a person or his/her perception towards work. According to this method, social workers should realize that it is up to a personal view of occurred obstacles at the workplace. One can think it is an obstacle that is a chance to overcome it. while others might think it is impossible to keep moving after this so they stop trying. In terms of the individualistic approach, there are several suggested ways that depending on the occasion and the nature of the case might be helpful (Pijpker, R., Vaandrager, L., Veen E. J., Koelen, M. A., 2019). For example, changing working timing and getting more flexible according to the productivity feeling. In this demands is also considered person possibility of managing own free time. Another way is to minimize expectations at the workplace and not set very high goals for yourself or for others. Also, an important way considered in this concern is to get help from others if needed, which will require social resources. The next is connected to the already mentioned topic in the above chapter, to have a proper relaxing time, that includes any type of free time activities, leisure, hobbies. The next way is taking care of health conditions. That might seem very simple and obvious but sometimes social workers who are usually giving advice to others forget about their own health. This has an effect on a lot of consequences in their professional life. The last one in this term is self-reflection time, which is significant not only for social workers but is absolutely beneficial for each person. Having well understanding own needs and standards is one step forward for dealing with bigger issues (Maslach, C., Goldberg, J., 1998).

The meaning behind these person-centred standards goes through the intervention, where the main aim is to avoid a person mismatch with his/her demands. The importance of coping with each person's burnout is clear when you consider how many issues one case might arise. With the different results burnout is getting an issue for a person because of its close relation with physical and emotional conditions (Pijpker, R., Vaandrager, L., Veen E. J., Koelen, M. A., 2019).

To analyze the work (organizational) centred approach of preventing burnout it consists of several variables and dimensions that will be reviewed in this part study paper.

In this case, the main aim of the approach according to the name should be changed not only personal but this time on organizational level. Most of the time it is not applicable to reality since even during this type of approach organizations are trying to change the person or the way of treating them. It is quite challenging to find missing circles in this case but some suggestions are related to

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changing the perception of the job in its demands. One way is to give workers more possibilities of expressing their ideas connected to the management or include them more into the decision-making process. Another way considered in this regard will be training that will be helpful for producing new practice-based skills (Maslach, C., Goldberg, J., 1998).

From the organization's viewpoint preventing burnout is connected to much more issues than just that one or two professionals in from of the danger of burnout syndrome. First of all, is important to provide these organizations with proper information about burnout syndrome. That will be beneficial for better understanding the meaning of it. There are some cases when less educated organization prefers to deal with burnout by completely different approaches for example they keep firing professionals and at the same time keep looking for new candidates. This process is considered not productive because of many personal organizational issues that it causes. Understanding the meaning of prevention is the right path to the truth for organizations that are seeking real ways of coping with professional burnout (Kumar, S., 2018).

The main ways of preventing burnout are supervision and intervision. In this concern is also offered different types of programmes that will depend on the organization and their characteristic to choose the appropriate one or the mix from these programmes. having supporting group meetings is one of those ways and considers the possibility to take between colleagues that are already familiar with existing conditions at work. Also, another type of supervision can be considered cognitive therapy possibility from an organization that is very helpful for creating a relaxed and less stressful environment among professionals. For social workers, it is also one of the ways of preventing burnout to gain knowledge about it and in terms of supervision at the organizational level, it might be held by work itself. On an organizational level is also another type of way of prevention, more detailed the way of improving staff relationships by using different kinds of approaches to maintain the healthy atmosphere between workers that are in danger of burnout or considered in the vulnerable group because of its specifications (Pijpker, R., Vaandrager, L., Veen E. J., Koelen, M. A., 2019).

Intervention strategies for organizations also vary to the countries and practice types. Some of them have the same goal as is mentioned in person-centred approaches or had the same goals as supervision but it is examined from the perspective of intervention (Maslach, C., Goldberg, J., 1998).

Figure 13 are presented categories and subcategories of suggestions from social workers in order to prevent burnout syndrome. Informants outlined suggestions directed to social workers and

to the administrative sector. The suggestions for social workers, to prevent professional burnout are frequent supervision, spending more time for relaxation and another important aspect in this regard has been stressed out to put clear lines between professional and personal life. Significant are the suggestions from informants for the administrative sector of the organizations where social workers are producing service. For this group of people, suggestions are to pay more attention to their workers' emotional condition, not to push them a lot and also they can provide mindfulness activities for their social workers.
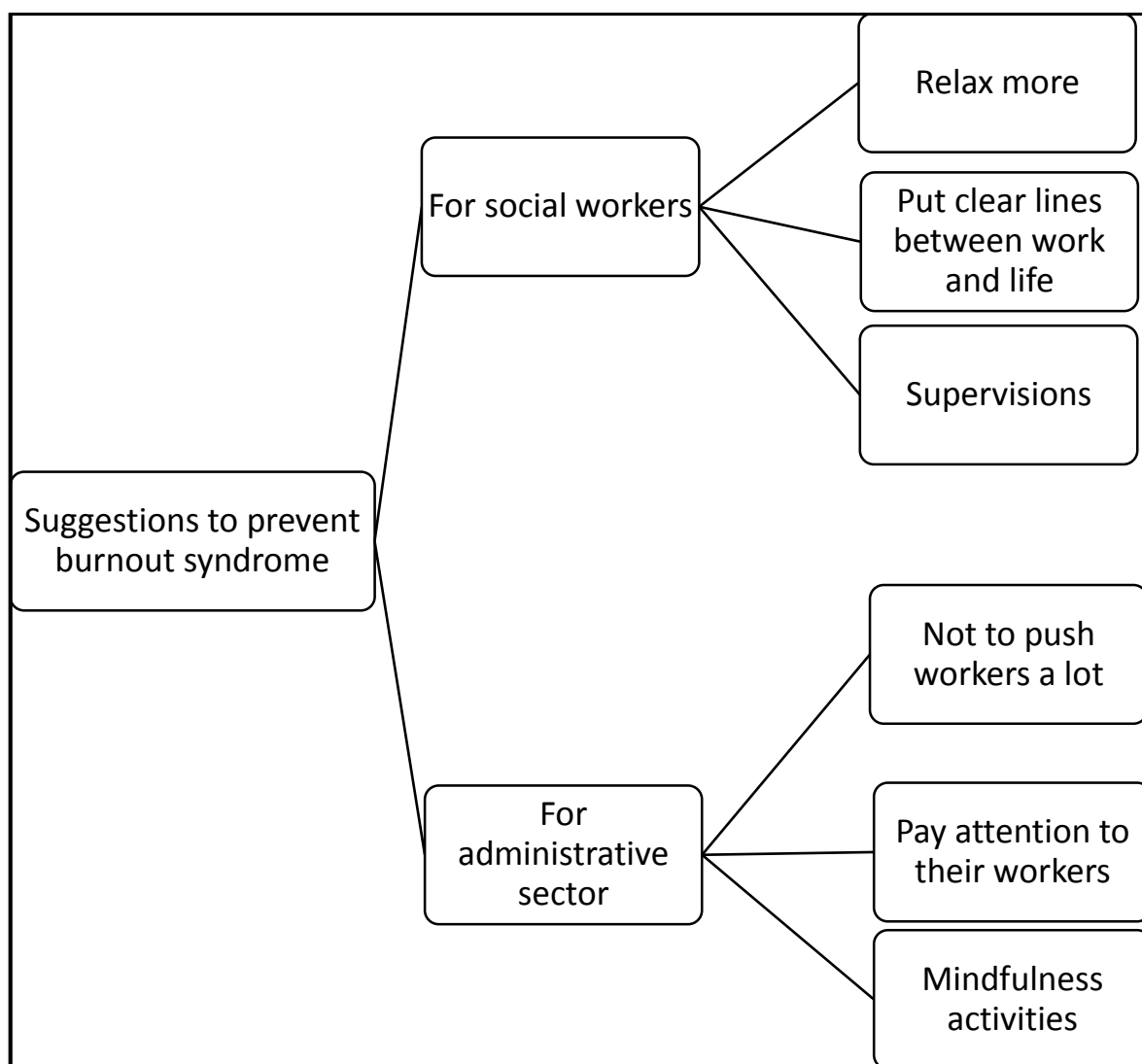

Figure 13: Suggestions to prevent burnout syndrome

Suggested ways for social workers: To relax more: *"<...>for me in this time it is really important to not take everything too serious, I know it is a bit funny but if you believe everything*

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that they say and what you hear it is really, really hard because sometimes I was really listening everything and I was even checking these numbers and all the day this news it is really hard <…>,<…> so my suggestion will be not to listen to everything and sometimes to relax.<…>" (In-1). "<…>The first one is that not to rush all the things and just sometimes you have to stop it and you have to let go of the situation and it is coming second thing because sometimes you think that you are the only one working and helping and without you it will be a disaster and then you feel guilty so you must do something<…>, <…>to stop thinking like that and let it go<…>" (In-3).

The next aspect mentioned by informants was the importance of putting clear lines between personal and work life: *"<…>I would suggest what suggest to myself right now to set a clear time when you are working and when you are not <…>, <…> When you are putting like meeting you also have to add like 10 min break or half an hour break so just to understand that your rest time is also important <…>" (In-2). "<…>have boundaries<…>, <…> to set personal boundaries that I could see. Having a routine is also important. To know when you are working like today you are working from ten till eight and that is it and after eight something nice for yourself <…>" (In-4).*

Another way offered by informants is having supervisions: *"<…>it depends on all possibilities of the work of your personal life but I think to have a regular team's supervisor's meetings and also to have like a personal one, speaking from the experience that we have our specialist and once per two weeks we go to speak personal supervisor about nu kind of therapy but concentrated in your working things and your working space<…>, <…> To have regular supervision with other social workers, also take care of themselves by going to the specialists <…>, <…> If you are thinking that I do not know, I am the person who takes a lot to himself and maybe burnout is coming so maybe to help yourself <…> (In-4)*

The ways of preventing burnout among social workers offered to the administration, sector are several. First one is to give possibility for flexible work to social workers and not to push them too much: *"<…>Suggestions will be that they do not give much more stuff to do coworkers because I know that my colleagues do not like it and when you do not like something and you are doing it then you do not feel good and in our job, it is very important to you also like what you do.<…>, <…> So I would advise them not to push too much and give some space give some freedom and give some time if someone needs it. <…>, <…> If someone comes and asks that sorry but these weeks, I cannot do for example this activity because I am not feeling that I can do it. Of course, it could be that everyone doing nothing but I am talking about sometimes if someone doing it all the time then she just does not like it.<…>" (In-1). "<…>I think it is very important to do not push*

people they are working with and in order to be the one who is sometimes pushing someone or creating some intense air should not be that kind of manager but you need to try to support every worker and to help maybe them instead of pushing and rushing to do things and reminding the responsibilities <…>" (In-3).

The next suggestion for administration sector is to pay more attention to their workers: "*<…>I would say that sometimes social workers forget about themselves so I would say that you need some person or director should us that do not you feel that you are overworking? Like how are you feeling like you need direct feedback to understand that you are working too hard or maybe we should all encourage ourselves not to work a lot?<…>, <…> set every week topic to give them time to talk with director or administration person but it depends on organization communication because in some organizations people are just too afraid of their directors and they cannot talk freely became overworking so the climate in the organization is also very important <…>"(In-2). "<…>I think it is important do not to forget them and understand that that person is responsible for other peoples change so their emotional and physical wellbeing is the most important so if they would feel better that they could treat others with that feeling so do not forget them.<…>, <…> if they are in school or like in our case school and nursery and they are looking for some seminars for teachers that they also could not forget the social workers you know to do that <…>" (In-4).*

The last method suggested for the administrative sector by informants is the mindfulness activities: "*<…>Maybe they could do some mindfulness workshops <…>, <…> I think it will be good practice to do some mindfulness activities, I do not know like some breathing exercises before you start work <…>" (In-5).*

To sum up this subchapter there are different types of suggestions for social workers and also for administrators advice by informants. For social workers, they mentioned the importance of having boundaries between work and personal life, relaxation and supervision. In terms of the administrative sector, informants suggested the following ways of preventing burnout: Pay enough attention to their workers, reduce stress towards social workers in terms of pushing their limits and at the end was mention mindfulness activities for social workers.

To summarize chapter that includes analysis of research data should be mentioned informant has been gone through several changes in their professional and personal life. There has been mentioned positive about the positive impact of Covid-19 like the possibility to work from home and at the same time negative outcomes for research informants such as difficulties in terms of the technical part and reduced amount of motivation. For this time one of the main initiatives for social

workers has been conducting their work through the online platform. Above mentioned changes had a different impact on people since for some of them it was the reason for increasing productivity level and for some opposite. Since part of having hobbies takes an important place in terms of analyzing social workers burnout syndrome, it was significant to point out the changes in terms of hobbies during the Covid-19 period. Informants mentioned stress, being tired and overwhelmed as the feelings during work at this time. At the end of this chapter, attention has been paid to the suggestions from social workers that might be helpful for preventing burnout syndrome.

3.3. Discussion of the study results

This research aimed to present theoretical and empirical knowledge about the professional burnout syndrome among social workers in Lithuania during Covid-19 time. The main findings of the study have been the result of content analysis of theoretical part and conducted research.

No matter some similarities with other diseases professional burnout is characterized by its own specific structure that is determinant in terms of the nature of this syndrome. From the literature review can be conceptualized that burnout syndrome is the result of not answered stressors at work (Maslach, C., Shaufeli, W. B., Leiter, M., 2001). By the nature of these reasons can vary from the consequences of job condition to the concept of the work by itself. Finally, it is depended on the types of relationships inside the organization (Gudžinskienė, V., Pozdniakovas, A., Šinkūnienė, J. R., 2021). Dimensions of professional burnout syndrome are closely connected and correlated with each other. Persons emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and the reduced amount of achievement are the main tools for identifying symptoms and job burnout as well (Stocchetti, N., Segre, G., Zanier, E. R, Zanetti, M., Campi, R., Scarpellini, F., lavenna, A., 2021). Even though the symptoms can differ and also the situation that is relevant for expressing burnout syndrome in terms of coping with it. There are several types of methods that might be helpful in order to prevent mentioned issues (Johnson, E. J., Wahab, H. A., 2010). Research revealed the possibilities for social workers who are seeking help in this regard can be differed by the main aim. There are person-centred and work centred approaches in terms of the nature of preventing ways for burnout syndrome among social workers.

Analysing the nature of this profession and more specific development of this working Lithuania gave great possibility to mention the significant role of social workers when it comes to

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adapting to rapid changes. Since through history, they have been in front of several challenges depending on a period and its characteristics. Challenges like the need for deinstitutionalization of social work and later developing it like a profession in the country which was in process of political and economical transitions was a great success (Snieškienė, D.) Another aspect of this research paper has been a recent event in our history that changed reality completely and cause-specific features that requires adjustment from every person, profession or organization. This event is a global pandemic named Covid-19 (Amiri, A. S., Akram, M. , 2020). In this terms for social workers in Lithuania for whom every aspect of this profession is closely related to the demands of development. recent changes were very important and worthy of deep analysis not only from the side of professional social workers but as well different directions of the profession. Covid-19 cause the changes of features of work in several aspects the biggest change in this terms can be considered the transition from face-to-face to online work (Tranca, L. M. , 2021). When these changes were the result of avoiding social connections. Since the main goal of society during a pandemic is to stay safe. Government and organizations agreed that social distancing was the best way to keep people away from high-risk areas for spreading the virus. For now there are more ways on the horizon because the vaccine is already available for the majority of people around the world but from the beginning when most of the professions were continued conducting their work from their electronic devices. There occur several problems or smaller issues (Sama, G. R., Matulic, V., Pascual, A. M., Vicente, I. , 2020).

Research showed that difficulties that have been during the pandemic were the reason of society in general and in this case social workers were not ready for these fast changes. The challenges characterized by this pandemic situation covers the struggles from the social worker's side and as well from their clients, connected to the digital issues like having not enough tools or skill for processing online work (Sama, G. R., Matulic, V., Pascual, A. M., Vicente, I. , 2020). Another struggle for social workers in this terms appaired ethical code and the issues connected to receiving confidential information from their beneficiaries. Social workers agreed that because of the nature of their work transition to online work had its own advantages and at the same time disadvantages. Even though online work in this field can be considered as not fully productive, some social workers had found ways of adjusting situations for their own good and keep improving in professional demand even during this kind of crisis situation (Kong, S.T., Noone, C., 2020). For the ones that Covid-19 became more disadvantageous in terms of work-life and accordingly faced

several struggles producing social work services, they appeared in great need of after-work activities or hobbies (Yelamanova, A., Yelesh, A., 2020).

In conclusion, can be said that pandemics showed us a lot of issues and teach important lessons which were not in our attention on a daily basis. In terms of social work, Covid-19 stressed the vulnerability of this profession and show to us, society the great need for health care professionals in general and in this case social workers.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Depending on occasion burnout in social workers can be expressed by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and/or reduced personal achievement. Having a clear perception of existing dimensions plays a significant role in terms of coping with this syndrome.

    *   Since burnout syndrome has a close connection to other issues diseases like stress for example differentiation of its symptoms and later finding the ways to prevent it is a huge challenge. Symptoms of professional burnout for social workers are related to this syndromes dimensions.

    *   There are several suggested ways in order to prevent professional burnout among social workers. These variants can differ depending on the main aim. Even though there are ways that are directed to the person and ways directed to an organization in terms of preventing burnout the best option considered will be a mix of these two.

2. Like other healthcare specialists social workers in Lithuania during Covid-19, are facing a lot of challenges encountered in their professional life. It varies from technical to social and emotional issues connected to the new reality. There is a need of gaining new skills in order to continue producing social work services.

    *   In terms of comparing situations at the workplace for social workers before and during pandemics from literature and data analysis, it is getting clear that changes are the response of rapid transition to crisis situations. If social workers had issues connected to their work-wise, now in Covid reality they are facing challenges connected to virus and at the same time old issues that have been added to the current situation. The biggest challenge for social workers is for everyone is connected to technical issues while conducting their service it has been practised that not always is possible to provide social work online. It has been stressed out that conducting social work services online is not handy for everyone since there are some people having no internet or device to receive internet. Another aspect is the right knowledge to use online platforms and in this regard, the last one can be named ethical aspects connected to online work.

3. Taking into account that the coronavirus crisis cause a lot of issues and problems for social workers and not only because of the great need for adaptation to rapid changes, it was valuable

that informants of this research have been found several advantages of being a social worker during the pandemic period.

- From the responses of social workers from different organizations of Lithuania got clear that during pandemics some aspects of their professional life were having similar reasons and consequences no matter that the nature of their workplace was different.

- Challenges stressed out by informants are connected to the new order of work that involved completely or partly transitions from face-to-face to online work. Social workers during pandemics have experienced both positive and also negative impacts of this concern. Online work is discussed in the spectrum of advantages for these times is that social workers got more flexibility while performing their work. Concern in the spectrum of disadvantages of working online in social work put several questions marks in terms of productivity and ethics.

- For social workers and their clients period of Covid-19 became the reason to appreciate the profession of social work and its impact on society better. Informants mentioned that the great need for healthcare during this time was applied to this profession as well.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. It can be recommended **for the administrative sector of organizations where social workers are working**, to pay attention to their social worker's emotional condition and acknowledge the characteristics of professional burnout.

2. **For social workers**, it can be recommended to be aware of burnout syndrome symptoms and consequences so will identify it in the early stages if that condition comes.

3. Another recommendation can be f**or the Lithuanian Association of Social Workers (LSDA)** to provide more frequent training and supervision for social workers from different organizations.

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SUMMARY

Ekaterine Lazarashvili. Professional burnout of social workers in the context of Covid-19 in Lithuania. Supervisor Professor dr. Vida Gudžinskienė. Mykolas Romeris University, Institute of Educational sciences and social work. Vilnius 2021.

Covid-19 started and soon became the reason for a lot of challenges for our society no matter their profession, nationality, age. The consequences of this global pandemic are reflected in society. Social workers are also included in the group of people whose professional life has been changed in response to rapid changes.

The aim of this study is to reveal the theoretical and empirical characteristics of professional burnout syndrome among social workers during the Coronavirus pandemic. In order to achieve this goal, there has been set following tasks: **To describe the concept, dimensions, symptoms and the ways of prevention of professional burnout. To describe and analyze the context of Covid-19 for social workers in Lithuania and to reveal the changes for social workers in terms of professional life.**

Research for this study has been conducted qualitative, semi-structured interviews with five professional social workers from the different organizations of Lithuania. Collected data has been analyzed using content analysis.

It was found that social workers together with other healthcare professionals are considered as one of the vulnerable professions when it comes to crisis situations like Covid-19. In the context of Covid-19 social workers in different organizations are facing several types of challenges depending on the nature of their work and the period of pandemic situation. Research showed that like for other professionals Covid-19 reality had its advantages and disadvantages at the same time. Disadvantages can be counted as technical issues connected to online work, ethical aspects while producing social work service. The advantage in this regard can be the acknowledgement of the importance of the social work profession, the fact that professional social workers had the possibility of flexible work

Keywords: Social work, Social worker, professional burnout, Covid-19.

SANTRAUKA

Covid-19 kontekste. Darbo vadovas prof. Dr. Vida Gudžinskienė. Mykolo Romerio universitetas, Edukologijos ir socialinio darbo institutas, Vinius 2021.

Vos prasidėjusi, Covid-19 pandemija sukėlę virtinę iššūkių mūsų visuomenėje, daugeliui skirtingų profesijų, tautybių ar amžiaus grupių žmonėms. Bėgant laikui Covid-19 pasekmės tapo tik dar aiškiau pastebimos visuomenės pokyčiuose. Socialiniai darbuotojai, viena iš grupių, kurių profesinis gyvenimas taip pat buvo paveiktas šių sparčių pokyčių.

Šio darbo **tikslas -** atskleisti teorines ir empirines socialinių darbuotojų profesinio perdegimo sindromo ypatybes koronaviruso pandemijos metu. Tikslui pasiekti buvo išsikelti šie uždaviniai: **apibūdinti profesinio perdegimo sampratą, dimennsijas, simptomus ir prevencijos būdus. Apibūdinti ir išanalizuoti Covid-19 kontekstą socialinių darbuotojų Lietuvoje atžvilgiu bei atskleisti to nulemtus socialinių darbuotojų profesinio gyvenimo pokyčius**.

Šiam tyrimui vykdyti buvo atlikti kokybiniai, pusiau struktūruoti interviu su penkiais profesionaliais socialiniais darbuotojais iš įvairių Lietuvos organizacijų. Surinkti duomenys išanalizuoti naudojant turinio analizę.

Nustatyta, kad socialiniai darbuotojai kartu su kitais sveikatos priežiūros specialistais yra laikomi viena iš pažeidžiamų profesijų, kai kalbama apie krizines situacijas, tokias kaip Covid-19. Covid-19 kontekste socialiniai darbuotojai įvairiose organizacijose susiduria su kelių tipų iššūkiais, priklausomai nuo jų darbo pobūdžio ir pandeminės situacijos laikotarpio. Tyrimai parodė, kad, kaip ir kitiems profesionalams, Covid-19 realybė turėjo ir privalumų, ir trūkumų. Trūkumai gali būti laikomi techninėmis problemomis, susijusiomis su darbu internetu, etiniais aspektais teikiant socialinio darbo paslaugą. Privalumas šiuo atžvilgiu gali būti socialinio darbo profesijos svarbos pripažinimas, bei tai, kad profesionalūs socialiniai darbuotojai turėjo galimybę lanksčiai dirbti.

Raktiniai žodžiai: socialinis darbas, socialinis darbuotojas, profesinis perdegimas, Covid-19.

ANNEXIES

Questions for semi-structured interviews with social workers:

Good day

I am a student at Mykolas Romeris University. Currently working on my master's thesis on social work with the Children and youth joint program. My thesis is about "Professional burnout of social workers in the context of Covid-19 in Lithuania" The main goal of this research is to analyze issues and ground of stress, burnout professional social workers during a pandemic. Your answers during this interview will be anonymous.

- What is your education background?
- How long are you working as a social worker?
- How long are you working in this organization?
- How old are you?

1. What advantages does your work have during Covid-19, for you?
2. What are the disadvantages of your work during this time?
3. How does Covid-19 change your life? What is different?
4. What are the challenges you are facing during the pandemic?
5. How are you dealing with challenges that arise in your personal life during Covid-19?
6. How are you reacting to initiatives taking place at your work during pandemics?
7. How would you evaluate your productivity at work this time? What is different now?
8. What are you doing in your free time after work? What are your hobbies? What are the changes regarding your free time activities to consider before and during the pandemic period?
9. How do you feel after work, during the Covid-19 period?
10. How is your relationship with colleagues?
11. What about timing, how did the number of your working hours change during the pandemic?
12. What would you like to be changed in your daily work life during Covid-19?

13. What are the suggestions that you want to give for social workers in order to prevent burnout syndrome?

14. What are your suggestions for the administration sector (admin, manager, director) to prevent burnout syndrome?

15. Who and how can help social workers to prevent burnout syndrome?

16. What suggestions would you like to get from other social workers?

Thank you for the interview.

Table 1. Group of questions, questions and the justification of questions.

Group of questions	Questions	Justification of the questions
Social workers life during Covid-19	How does Covid-19 change your life? What is different?	Since this pandemic is affecting us physically and mentally, and social workers by the meaning of it, are responsible for their patients mental and physical condition (What is Social Work, 2020).
	What are the challenges you are facing during the pandemic?	Social workers together with all people working in the human service sector are in the risk group of facing professional stress and burnout (Llod, C., King, R., Chnoweth, L. , 2011)
	How are you dealing with challenges that arise in your personal life during Covid-19?	It will be a noteworthy fact to know how were they living and facing problems by themselves, During professional activities and their personal life, during this hard time. It can be a pressure not to be judgmental as professional ethic requires from social workers, handle all emotional difficulties caused by having a close relationship with a different type of personalities, it might also be a mismatch with Social Work ideals, difficulties in personal life and etc. (Kim, H., 2008).
Symptoms of professional burnout syndrome among social workers.	How are you reacting to initiatives taking place at your work during pandemics?	To discuss separately each of them, let's start from a group of psycho-physical symptoms: chronic fatigue during the day, feeling of physical and emotional exhaustion often, decrease of energy, loss of interest in any news happening around (it can be positive or negative news), Being tired all day long (McLean, H. L., Wilburn, R. , 1991).
	How would you evaluate your productivity at work this time? What is different now?	Usually, these tasks are the basic, elementary actions that do not really play a big role in a person's productivity. (Makasheva, N., Makasheva, J., Gromava, A., Ishtunov, S., Burykhin, B., 2016)
	What are you doing in your free time after work? What are your hobbies? What are the changes regarding your free time activities to consider before and during the pandemic period?	For example, some people in this condition might request for more or opposite to it less working hours and tasks to do. In this case, it depends on the nature of the person (Jiang, H., Wang, Y., Chui, E., Xu, Y., 2019).
	How do you feel after work, during the Covid-19 period?	Emotional Exhaustion (EE): is the state of being extremely tired (MerriamWebster, 1828), Everyone experiences emotional exhaustion differently but symptoms can be the following: lack of motivation, insomnia, physical fatigue, headache, pessimism,

		feelings of hopelessness, apathy, nervousness, depression (Cafasso, J. , 2019).
	How is your relationship with colleagues?	….. And the last point from behavioral symptoms is the desire to keep distance from colleagues (Makasheva, N., Makasheva, J., Gromava, A., Ishtunov, S., Burykhin, B., 2016).
	What about timing, how did the number of your working hours change during the pandemic?	Another sign is very significant in behavioral symptoms since it catches small but important enough tasks from a person's life. When she/he insists to take work at home several times but at the end never completes this task. (Makasheva, N., Makasheva, J., Gromava, A., Ishtunov, S., Burykhin, B., 2016).
	What would you like to be changed in your daily work life during Covid-19?	This type of symptom is also considered the changes in working routine. For example, some people in this condition might request for more or opposite to it less working hours and tasks to do. In this case, it depends on the nature of the person (Jiang, H., Wang, Y., Chui, E., Xu, Y., 2019)